

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

## CONTENTS

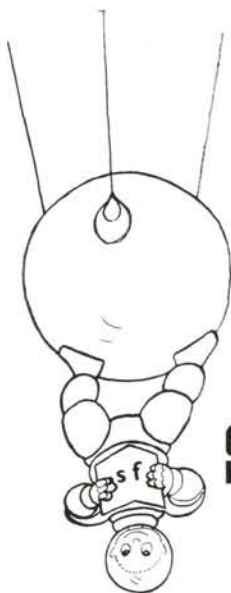
English Art Exhibition	A. Chegodaev
Questions Without Answers	M. Turovskaya
The Legacy of William Morris	B. Shragin
Differentiation and Equality in Soviet Schools	Edmund King
'Khovanshchina' as a Film	D. T. Richnell
An Unpublished Letter by David Garrick	

## BOOK AND RECORD REVIEWS

VOLUME XXI ~ NUMBER 3

AUTUMN  
1960

TWO SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE



## science fiction

*for leisure hours  
and Christmas gifts*

### **DRAWINGS BY SOVIET CHILDREN**

A beautiful album of children's art with ninety colour plates

21s

### **CHANCE MEETINGS V. BIANKI**

Charming stories for young nature-lovers—and their elders

3s

### **AELITA ALEXEI TOLSTOY**

A flight to Mars, a revolution and a tender love story in the Wellsian tradition

3s 6d

### **ANDROMEDA IVAN YEFREMOV**

A scientific fantasy of humanity in touch with the cosmos

10s 6d

### **THE GARIN DEATH RAY ALEXEI TOLSTOY**

An exciting science fantasy in which the future of humanity, threatened by the power-hungry inventor Garin, is defended by two brave youngsters

6s

### **DUROV AND HIS PERFORMING ANIMALS E DVINSKY**

The story of the great Russian circus clown and his famous technique of taming and training animals

3s 6d

### **FIGURES FOR FUN Y PERELMAN**

Mathematical brainteasers for youngsters

3s

### **DO YOU KNOW? ILYIN & SEGAL**

An amusing and instructive question-and-answer book for children

6s

catalogue available on request

**Central  
Books**  
37 Grays Inn Rd  
London WC1

# The ANGLO - SOVIET JOURNAL

---

Autumn 1960. Vol. XXI, Number 3

---

*Editor* : H. C. Creighton

*Editorial Committee* : Leonard Cassini, Dr. L. Crome, Jack Lindsay,  
Andrew Rothstein, Prof. J. S. Spink.

*Editorial Office* : 14 Kensington Square, London, W.8. Tel. : WEStern 1571

---

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<b>Differentiation and Equality in Soviet Schools</b> . . . . Edmund King	2
<b>Questions Without Answers</b> . . . . . M. Turovskaya	6
<b>The Legacy of William Morris</b> . . . . . B. Shragin	15
<b>An Unpublished Letter by David Garrick</b> . . . . .	22
<b>Gramophone Review : Shostakovich Masterpieces</b> . Bernard Stevens	23
<b>Surveys and Reviews</b>	
<b>The Greatness and Decline of English Art</b> . . . . A. Chegodaev	25
<b>'Khovanshchina' as a Film</b> . . . . . D. T. Richnell	29
<b>Book Reviews</b> . . . . .	34

*The Vodi*—A. Anikst; *Soviet Short Stories*—Edwin Morgan; *Pisemsky and Kuprin*—W. S. Bailey; *Moscow Theatres Today*—Mark Dignam; *Film History*—Jay Leyda; *Radio for Everyman*—J. C. Siddons; *From Kensington to Krasnoyarsk*—J.S.G.; *Moistening the Lips*—Kathleen Taylor; *Russian Names*—E.K.; *Slavonic Papers*—Andrew Rothstein; *Constitutional Law*—M. Hookham; *Russian Saints*—Xenia Fielding Clarke; *Popular Geology*—J. C. Siddons; *Teaching Aids for Adults*—P. Henry; *Industrialising Kazakhstan*—Joan Robinson; *Wall Charts*—R. Allison; *Russian Grammar on a Chart*—P. Henry.

Reproduction of any article or review in the 'Anglo-Soviet Journal', in whole or in part, is permitted provided that the ASJ reference is given and a copy of the reproduction sent to the Editor.

---

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION 10/- post free; SCR members 8/6; joint SCR/ASJ subscription 19/- with reduction to 11/- for students. Single copies 2/6, post, etc., 3d.  
Back numbers available.

---

Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

## DIFFERENTIATION AND EQUALITY IN SOVIET SCHOOLS

Dr. Edmund King

The author, who is lecturer in comparative education at King's College, London, led a London University comparative education tour to the USSR in the Easter vacation. His article, he writes, surveys 'only one small aspect of a totally impressive experience. Thoroughness, high standards, cheerfulness, and a deep dedication to education have been taken for granted.' Avoiding repetition of descriptions of the Soviet education system abundantly available elsewhere, Dr. King has thought it preferable to concentrate on a mechanism that we might well study more closely both for experiment and evaluation.

THE writer's first-hand experience of Soviet schools is (so far) limited to two weeks in Moscow and Leningrad this year. On the other hand, as a teacher of comparative education and out of personal interest, he has read everything available about Soviet education in several languages during the past few years, and has had many discussions with Soviet, Chinese, Polish and Yugoslav educators about communist school systems. Also, a certain preparedness comes from extensive visits to educational institutions of many types in many parts of the world.

Still, any short article based on that kind of foundation must necessarily consist mainly of impressions, many of which will either reinforce or compensate impressions already formed at second hand. Yet the presence of senior specialists from a great variety of disciplines, and from most parts of the world, on the first Russian comparative education tour from the London University Institute of Education did make it a little easier to come into realistic contact with what administrators and teachers are actually doing in Soviet schools. In this article an attempt will be made to indicate some Soviet solutions evolving in practice (though not always fully acknowledged in principle) to answer the big question being asked everywhere : How do we reconcile differentiation between children with fair and equal treatment ?

'From everyone according to his abilities, to each according to his needs'—this central criterion is applied everywhere in sometimes unexpected ways. A sort of parable will illustrate the point. The dear old women sweeping with what look like ineffectual rush brooms go on doing what they can, while others work more efficiently with mechanical pavement sweepers, and still others operate huge road cleaners. They are all usefully employed ; they have a status as they make their contribution ; and no one can deny the remarkable cleanliness that they and the tidy citizens maintain. External criteria of man-hours and the like seem out of place. This somewhat fanciful reflection seemed to one observer to be obliquely though truly relevant to the whole business of securing specialisation of endeavour in schools.

The exacting needs of state plans are minutely calculated in advance ; the personnel are secured in the various specialisations, in different ranges of effectiveness or skill ; yet the all-pervading insistence on *concerted* construction of a new world makes it impossible to think of 'selection' as we generally understand that word, and necessary to think of 'differentiation' instead. The emphasis is on complementary partnership, and not on exclusion.

For all that, the various complementary partners are effectively sorted out. Soviet dislike of 'tests' and the social and emotional complex surrounding them makes many educators unwilling to diagnose what selective principles they

employ, or indeed to acknowledge that a selective mechanism is at work. (They need have no such scruples. Harm comes not from selection as such, but rather from the social purposes to which it is sometimes put.) In practice, Soviet differentiation seems to be very thorough, and to be done in ways to which many other countries should give earnest thought. Apart from the egalitarian claims of liberal manifestos, the logic of industrialisation itself demands a much wider scatter of specialisation *on much the same level*, and with an all-pervading realisation of everyone else's being integral to any job in hand. If the mechanics of Soviet differentiation (quite apart from heed paid to political manifestos) reinforce the sense of equality-with-differentiation, that surely merits admiration.

Informal conversations with Soviet educators at many levels confirmed a previous inference that the 'strengthening of the ties of school with life' was not only an attempt at socialist realism but a vindication of these truths: (1) that academic specialisation is not of itself more meritorious than other kinds of skill; (2) that the 'middle' or ten-year school had been almost too successful in producing pre-university people, with an expectation of automatic prestige in consequence of their specialisation; (3) that the expansion and technological thoroughness of Soviet enterprises demand not merely vastly more entrants at the technician and foreman level but a higher general education and prestige for those workers.

To secure both (1) and (3) would be fairly easy by means of wage differentials, in Soviet circumstances. It is all the more significant therefore that scholastic devices are used as well, or instead. These are presumably considered to be more effective in the long run.

How is it done? No final answer can be given to this question, because each school or other educational institution visited was clearly in full evolution or expecting it. Administrators and teachers were groping towards new expedients or awaiting results. But enough evidence was available to indicate trends reliably enough.

At the age of 15, usually following some pre-vocational insight into the character and conditions of various local enterprises, more than half of all the children will have their training continued either in a form of industrial apprenticeship of a markedly technical kind (but in school) or in direct employment supplemented with evening or late afternoon instruction of a 'general education' type with a more 'life-orientated' slant. Indeed, Deputy Minister Markushevich and others forecast that about half of all children might be in the latter category alone. The provision of at least three more years of general education by direct attendance or by correspondence will be not only a personal supplementation but in some cases an inducement to proceed to further qualifications. So, we were told, in all cases the result in general education would be similar.

Time off with pay could be had for special studies or examinations. The 15—18 changeover would be completed in 1964-5. Only a minority thereafter would be in the more academic type of 11-year school. Selection for the ninth year of all types would depend upon (a) manifested abilities and interests, (b) the needs and opportunities revealed in neighbouring enterprises, and (c) personal choice.

Taking this period of decision as a suitable diagnostic point, we note that 'on the job' differentiation and para-curricular indications have already tended to sort out some children from others. There is not only the old-fashioned criterion that those with an average of three marks or less out of five have had to repeat a class or two, and that those with straight 'fives' throughout will probably in future belong to that 20 per cent of institute and university entrants who are admitted to higher education without having two-year periods of full-time work experience; there is also an important factor in



the evidence available from youth organisations. Apart from the fact that office-holding and other responsibilities in the Pioneers depend quite largely upon good scholastic attainment, the remarkable encouragement to enterprise offered in the various Pioneer centres is undoubtedly an inducement to experimentation in all the practical sciences and arts, and an incentive to further reading and study.

So much is obvious at a glance. When we consider in addition the provision of courses, of lecturers, and indeed of a sort of coaching for the various competitions and 'Olympiads', observers feel even more strongly that a continuous endeavour is maintained to pick out and encourage talent of all kinds, no matter where it is found or how it manifests itself. Yet this self-differentiation is found in the very place where socialisation and fellowship are most thoroughly attended to. Differences are stressed, but in no sense of creating an élite.

Thus the rather monotonous sameness of some school lessons, with everyone doing the same work in the same circumstances and at the same pace, receives its differentiating complement from outside. Within the classroom itself, however, Soviet teachers often differentiate between the various pupil abilities not just because they are like teachers everywhere else, but especially because of the so-called 'concentric' method of teaching in vogue in the USSR.

According to this, the germ of an item of learning is presented first in simple form in the lowest classes, or at a first encounter, and is gradually surrounded with its more difficult corollaries at each of many subsequent repetitions. At various stages in the process, progress is made from simple repetition of the new datum to the use of it in kindred sentences or examples, then on to paraphrase or parallel, and finally on to a more explicit mastery of the principle involved and a fresh restatement. Teachers were observed following this plan from the first year of school to the last in an institute. This system (in Soviet circumstances of maintaining an even pace throughout instruction) encourages teachers to try the easy stages on the least advanced pupils in a class, and vice versa. So apart from the actual award of marks a teacher's daily routine displays clear differentiation.

After the 15-year-olds are sorted out into work, vocational training, or the 'general and polytechnic' completion of the 11-year school, still further differentiation appears to be made. Both teachers and administrators, it seems, distinguish emphatically between the more narrowly vocational craft school (*remeslennoe uchilishche*) which hitherto has recruited its pupils from 14 upwards, and the more advanced technical school (*tekhnicheskoe uchilishche*) for which a ten-year school education has become a prerequisite. Both kinds of institution are closely 'linked with life' through the bond with the patron enterprise, where up to 70 per cent of the trainees' time is spent; but it is clear that one is more technically advanced than the other. Therefore, if selection is made either at 15 or at 18 in future, the differentiation between the pupils in each place will probably carry much the same significance in practice as the present distinction between the various grades of instructor (i.e. *master*, *uchitel'*, and *professor*) in everyday speech.

Similarly, the future provision of 12 hours a week of practical working experience even for those pupils in the 'general education and polytechnic' upper school again broadens the front of evidence according to which youngsters can display their talents or shortcomings. It is thus a selective device, as well as a vestibule to careers.

If, as seems likely, the future 20 per cent of mathematicians, physicists and other 'theoretical' scientists who will be exempted from the necessity of in-school and after-school working experience are to be picked out by evidences of attainment during the last three school years, some very marked selection must take place. However, there can be no doubt that, in the eyes of almost

every Soviet educator encountered, differentiation is seen as a varied array of evocation in different patterns rather than as a 'sheep and goats' affair.

Space does not allow an elaboration of this theme with other evidence drawn from higher education, where it seems equally clear and indeed impressively successful. It seems marked, not only as between different kinds of institution (with additional inquiries and interview judgments imposed by professors), but also as between different institutions of the same kind. This is human enough, and to be expected. In Soviet social and economic circumstances there seems no reason why differentiation should be regarded as reprehensible *per se*.

Britons who have seen the best side of American education often refer with admiration to the 'open doors' feeling that exists in the USA by contrast with most of education in Britain. To the writer it seemed that the Soviet system embodied the same evocation and opportunity to an even greater degree, and that the principle was more effectively put into practice if only for the realism with which the actual programmes of training and instruction were graded according to their functional importance to the community; yet this functional differentiation in the USSR did not mar the feeling of common heritage in a common birth (*narod*) or the real sense of personal significance in a whole social evolution.

## **RECENT SCR INFORMATION BULLETINS**

### **Education**

**The Soviet System of Educating Deaf Children.**  
Vol. 7. No. 1. 1/6 (1/10 post free).

### **Law**

**New Soviet Legislation Concerning Inventions.**  
Vol. 7. No. 2. 1/6 (1/10 post free).

### **Medical**

**Decision to Improve the Medical Service and Health Protection.**  
Vol. 7. No. 1. 1/6 (1/10 post free).

### **Psychology**

**The Psychology of Applying Knowledge in School Work.**  
Vol. 7. No. 1. 1/6 (1/10 post free).

### **Science**

**Science in the Future ; New Rules of USSR Academy of Sciences.**  
Vol. 7. No. 1. 1/6 (1/10 post free).

**All available from SCR, 14 Kensington Square, London, W.8.**

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

M. Turovskaya

**During the Moscow International Film Festival in the summer of 1959 and later in the week of British films shown in Moscow and other cities, Soviet film-goers saw a number of recent British films. In this article we present the notes of a Soviet critic on some of these films and her impressions of British cinema today.**

### WHAT MAMMA DON'T ALLOW

**D**URING the day they work. One is a cleaner in a cafe, on her knees under the tables, with a wet rag in her hand. Another is a butcher's help. One girl is a dentist's assistant—fetch . . . carry . . . sterilise. A few even work as window cleaners on the railway—not very pleasant work, but what can one do . . . ?

But when evening comes they hurriedly take off their dirty overalls, their starched nurses' uniforms and cleaners' dungarees, and remove the kerchiefs from their heads. Long straight hair and short straight hair. Full skirts and tight pants, a little below the knees—slim Jims. Girls who look like sad, uncared-for-urchins, and boys, with the stylish haircuts typical of the 'man descended from the apes'. They hurry, they rush.

And out there the saxophones and trumpets are already in their places. A small amateur jazz band. Shoes scrape on the floor. Someone is still washing railway carriage windows, and another hurrying down the street when the saxophone gives out its yearning, inviting wail. The mosaic glass sphere glitters and shimmers. The dark low hall is filling rapidly.

A girl is spun round and round. Newcomers push their way through the crowd of dancers. Here and there groups of people are drinking beer—the only refreshment served. Two girls dance together. A girl is spun round and round, round and round.

They support this club themselves, out of their own earnings. During the day they work, and at night they dance . . .

The documentary *Mamma Don't Allow* was perhaps the most interesting film of the quite extensive and varied programme of shorts shown by British film producers at the Dom Kino.

One can fully appreciate the advantages of the 'dynamic frame' technique, capable of expanding to a wide panorama or contracting to the figure of a single person, in the experimental film based on H. G. Wells's story *The Green Door*. One can watch with interest the original cartoon fantasy *Shortsightedness*, which warns of the danger of atomic war. But this short documentary made by Karel Rasc and Tony Richardson (the latter known to us for his production of the play *Look Back in Anger*, shown at the Sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow) cannot but attract attention by its topicality.

Modern life and its problems, as harsh and disturbing as the wail of a saxophone, have entered English literature and theatre. 'Lucky Jim', from Kingsley Amis's novel, immediately became an everyday name, a well-known person. This delightfully clumsy hero, who tries in vain to maintain his respectability and bourgeois 'normality' but inevitably—and with an inner feeling of malicious satisfaction—loosens his hold, started a long string of new characters.

He was followed by aimless Charles Lumley, from Wain's novel *Hurry On Down*, Jimmy Porter from Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*, personifying the new generation of 'angry young men'. Nineteen-year-old Shelagh Delaney's play *A Taste of Honey* caught the imagination by the realistic, straightforward-



ness—not, however, without poetry of its own—of this love drama of the slums.

New heroes, new problems, unsolved, but presented with wounding sharpness when the gibe is directed just as much against oneself as against others. The tragedy of the post-war generation whose inheritance is the collapse of Labour illusions, bitter distrust of bourgeois virtues, and a paralysing fear of atomic war. Of course, not all young Englishmen are by any means 'angry', and the fate of the 'angries' is not the only conflict of life in Britain. But their fate does reflect the new, sharp crisis of bourgeois existence.

Conflict in the old classical drama of bourgeois society (whether it was written as a play, short story or novel) was largely a matter of money. It was a destructive and cruel struggle for survival; it had its victors and victims, its hunters and prey. This struggle goes on today, too, and the large city knows its unemployed, slums and hunger. And although the struggle for survival also faces the 'angry' young man, although everything he does is in pursuit of money, nevertheless the conflict in this new drama has shifted to a slightly different plane.

Lucky Jim could, with much effort, get a place on the faculty of a university; Charles Lumley could find a good job as a teacher. Jimmy Porter could spend some of his time earning a living instead of sitting at home making life miserable for the others. Perhaps one of them could have succeeded and made a career. But a career does not attract them. They are the voluntary exiles of bourgeois society. It is not so much that they are unable to occupy a stable position in this society as that even had they been able to, by winning their struggle and becoming the 'spiders' and not the 'flies' in the sticky cobweb of money (using Wain's not very original metaphor), they would still not be happy.

Sometimes they feel they are rebels, like Osborne's hero; sometimes they simply grope around blindly, as if to escape from the weighty power of the bourgeois way of life. 'Like yourself, I too have broken away from the well measured, dull life', says Charles Lumley in Wain's novel, 'but not because I was particularly rebellious or kicked very hard against it. I did not even fight against the accepted values: they simply did not accept me.' Bourgeois commonplaceness does not accept these people, just as they do not accept it. Capitalist society has nothing to offer them, and they turn away from its celebrated way of life and its widely advertised blessings.

Kingsley Amis's hero feels more at ease in a low pub than in his professor's furnished house. Wain's hero, scorning his education, passes through a succession of jobs as window cleaner, chauffeur, smuggler, hospital orderly, bouncer in a night club, until he finally lands a job as a disc jockey with a radio company.

They know what they do not want. They do not want bourgeois respectability and hypocrisy, bourgeois security and triviality. They do not want to believe in the illusions offered to them by the bankrupt, moribund society. They are not afraid of breaking away from their own class, and do not scorn any kind of work, even the most manual. Neither are they afraid of sinking to the lowest rung of the social ladder. But having broken away from their own background they find nothing in its place, and remain just as lonely and aimless. Having left one class, they do not want to identify themselves with another, and remain in the emptiness of their own illusory 'neutrality'.

What do they want? This they do not yet know, nor can they understand. The question is posed, but no answer is found. Their revolt against bourgeois society knows no other forms but those of that same society.

The documentary *Mamma Don't Allow* belongs to that category of artistic expression where questions are only posed and it is left to life itself to answer them. It glosses nothing over and accuses no one. It simply points out. But

if what is needed is an obvious, living expression of that negative attitude to all previous bourgeois illusions and generally accepted categories which Osborne's hero angrily proclaims and Kingsley Amis's hero so easily achieves, this is it.

What Charles Lumley did quite consciously, that is from 'conviction', here acquires a spontaneous, mass, everyday character. Here not only morality (after all, mamma don't allow it), but also aesthetics—as they put it, 'bourgeois' striving after 'beauty'—come in for silent criticism. And the same silent criticism is directed at the old conception of 'respectability'. Like Wain's hero, these young people do not scorn the most dirty, casual labour that earns them their right to this overcrowded basement and their endless rock 'n' roll—the wretched expression of their sincere but confused protest.

The night club has one peculiarity that hits one in the eye. There are hardly any girls who, by conventionally accepted standards, could be called pretty. Or perhaps they don't appear pretty because they don't try to do so. In any case, there isn't a single nicely dressed girl in the whole crowd. Blouses, sweaters, jumpers, jeans of one kind or another. We see only two attractive, well-dressed women. They and their escorts drop in for only half-an-hour, and they are at least ten to fifteen years older than the rest of the crowd.

One remembers Dorothy Tutin in the Shakespearian plays presented by the Stratford Memorial Theatre. The same lack of aesthetics which is here a part of everyday life there touched the most sacred of the arts. How can one imagine gentle Ophelia or passionate Juliet with the pale thin face of a modern city girl, with clumsily and casually tied hair on the back of her head, in a short nightgown, awkwardly pulled down to cover her bare legs when this Juliet falls rather ungracefully on her bed after having taken poison? This is not the enchanting, decorous and vivacious Dorothy Tutin we saw on the screen in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. This is not Shakespeare's strong, passionate Juliet, but a completely modern Juliet who feels strange and cold in the brilliant world of the Montagues and Capulets, in the world of dynastic marriages, traditional enmity and traditional love. She seeks understanding, compassion, and affectionate tenderness, and, having found her Romeo, doesn't ask mamma for anything else.

The contemporary anti-bourgeois theme and the contemporary sense of reality percolate from diametrically opposite ends into British art. The cinema lags behind the theatre and literature in this respect, but it has at last begun to concern itself with the problems raised in the art of the 'angries'.

## BRITISH FILM WEEK

IT MAY seem strange that cinematography lags behind literature and even the theatre. For surely this art as no other is in close touch with modern life and modern man; the theatre is burdened with the weight of traditions and conventions, whereas the cinema is wholly in the 20th century.

The crisis of the British cinema is linked, it seems, to the very complicated economic conditions in which it has been placed by the competition of television and the expansion of American films. Nevertheless, the British Film Week in Moscow showed that films like *Mamma Don't Allow* are not an exception, and that contemporary themes find their way, although with some difficulty, into feature films.

The word 'contemporaneity' does not necessarily mean that the action takes place in our time.

The charming and very English comedy *Genevieve* can only formally be called contemporary, although its simple, uncomplicated story takes place today. However, even the story is based on an amusing tradition—one of many English traditions—to hold a race for very old cars along the route once taken by the first British motor car. Here you can witness the traditional quarrels and

suspensions of a married couple and laugh at the original adventures of two representatives of the old creaky fraternity, told with rather slow English humour. But there is nothing in it that may be termed 'contemporary character'.

The film *Woman in a Dressing Gown* bears far more signs of the contemporary. We are used by now to seeing the ordinary everyday life of ordinary people on the screen, as if caught unawares, and in this sense *Woman in a Dressing Gown* comes up to expectations. The very content of the film is true to life, and actress Yvonne Mitchell knows how to arouse our interest and sympathy for the heroine, even though she is slovenly, fidgety and not loved by her husband. Here the marital quarrels and suspicions are no longer of the conventionally comic kind: they are quite real and not altogether devoid of a certain amount of comment.

The flat crammed with rubbishy bits and pieces, where the muddle-headed, always dishevelled, wife and mother finds it impossible to maintain even a semblance of order; the impersonal cleanliness and boredom of the office where the husband works; the smart, pedantic elegance of the typist Georgie and her quiet thoughtfulness—these fragments of reality help us to understand the circumstances of the unhappy, unfaithful husband, which is the subject of one of those dramas whose sincerity and authenticity are beyond doubt, yet which nevertheless leave one with a feeling of dissatisfaction.

But even if we agree that the heroine of the film has not become shallow and gone to seed entirely through her own fault, but also because of her husband and his limitations, his weakness and his spiritual inertia; even if we recognise that, mutually guilty, they are at the same time irrevocably tied together by the years of their marriage and even by their guilt itself—the lesson learned from this story does not seem particularly significant, nor its modernity very deep.

*The Horse's Mouth*, as typically English as *Genevieve*, is far more interesting. I shall not write in detail about this film, based on Joyce Carey's novel of the same title, simply because the extremely eccentric figure of the artist Gully Jimson, played by Alec Guinness, deserves separate and detailed consideration for which there is no space in this article.

Alec Guinness in no way embellishes his role of Gully Jimson, who, obsessed by his artistic ideas, can at times be very disagreeable, pettily suspicious. This very complex personality, in whom one can now see an old man still with a sense of mischief, now a quick-witted creator of fantastic frescoes, is portrayed with such ease and truth of physical presence that this alone makes the film an interesting event. His co-star, Kay Walsh, with her ill-concealed feminine jealousy of Jimson's former wife and her sincere lack of understanding of painting and equally sincere admiration for it, creates a character so rich and authentic that it can compete with anything on the screen today.

Here the protest against bourgeois society is expressed through the old but ever-new collision between the artist and his society. It must be said that this contradiction stands out more sharply in this film than, for example, in the French *Montparnasse, 19*, in which we have a rather banal love story and an even more banal image of an artist in whom there is the usual combination of genius and debauchery; also a moving death from starvation while the cunning and heartless evil genius bides his time for the posthumous recognition and posthumous wealth of the artist (no matter that Modigliani's real fate was truly tragic). In *The Horse's Mouth* this theme of the conflict between artist and society is developed along quite distinct lines, very much in the tradition of the English tragi-comedy, where the most authentic, and at times brutal, realism is changed lightheartedly into the grotesque and even the eccentric.

However, the contemporary aspect of the anti-bourgeois theme under discussion here is reflected only on the edges of the film. Perhaps the young un-

employed artists helping Jimson create his grandiose fresco could be regarded as distant relatives of the characters in *Mamma Don't Allow*.

Thus both *The Horse's Mouth* and *Woman in a Dressing Gown*, for all the undoubted success of the actors and the real life reflected in them, do not really deal with the essential problems of contemporary life touched on in *Mamma Don't Allow*. Although Alec Guinness's wonderful performance and Kay Walsh's excellent acting give us some unexpected sidelights on the modern personality, the most significant film for the future of the English cinema among those recently seen here is *Room at the Top*, far from perfect though it is.

### THE PRICE OF ROOM AT THE TOP

THROUGH some misunderstanding, *Room at the Top* was shown here in the USSR under the title of *The Attic*. Directed by Jack Clayton, it is, like *Woman in a Dressing Gown* and *The Horse's Mouth*, the screen version of a modern novel of the same title, written by John Braine.

Here again we find literature leading the way and the cinema obliged to use its fruits in the meantime. However, the film is fairly independent of the novel, and can be regarded as an achievement of British cinema, and its characters as contemporary ones, created through the medium of the screen.

At first glance the story of Joe Lampton, a provincial youth, arriving in prosperous Warley from wretched Dufton in search of happiness, may seem too familiar. In literature we quite frequently meet such ambitious young men from the provinces who, equipped for their first fight against the world with only their energy, intelligence and good looks, set out in search of 'room at the top'.

Lampton's relations with the two women—Susan Brown, daughter of the local boss, marriage to whom promises him quick attainment of his goal ; and Alice Aisgill, who has nothing to offer him but her love—bring to mind Stendhal's Julien Sorel, Balzac's Lucien Chardon, Maupassant's Georges Duroy, and Dreiser's Clyde Griffiths, as mentioned by D. Pisarevsky in his article 'The Spirit of the Times and the Light of the Screen' (*Iskusstvo Kino*, 1959, No. 10). The similarity of the situation is striking ; though Joe Lampton does not shoot his mistress, nor drown her in a lake as does Clyde Griffiths, he is nevertheless the cause of Alice's suicide.

And yet is everything in this film so hopelessly conventional ? Doesn't the story of Joe Lampton really offer anything new compared with its predecessors ? What, then, gives the English critic Penelope Houston grounds for hoping that the appearance of *Room at the Top* will, with all its faults, become as notable a date for British cinema as the production of *Look Back in Anger* was for the theatre, or the publication of *Lucky Jim* for literature ?

'The young man of the 19th century' went through a complicated process of evolution in the novels of Stendhal, Balzac and Maupassant. But the similarity of the situations does not prevent Chardon being different from Julien Sorel and Georges Duroy different from them both. The difference is the difference of the times that gave them birth.

The young man of the middle of the 20th century, involved in the old classic collision which has been repeated more than once, and which will probably be repeated many more times in art and in life, is no longer the same person as his literary predecessors. He is much farther from them and much closer to his contemporaries—Jim Porter, Lucky Jim, Charles Lumley.

Let us recall the end of Maupassant's novel :

'He now cast his thoughts back, and before his eyes, dazzled by the strong sunlight, floated the image of Mme de Marelle fixing the curls on her temples, always dishevelled on getting out of bed.

'It [the church] was full of people, for everybody had returned to his seat, in order to watch them [the newly-weds] pass by together. He [Duroy] walked slowly, with measured

step, his head held high, his eyes fixed on the great sunlit bay of the door. He felt long shivers run over his skin, those cold shivers caused by great happiness. He saw no one. He thought only of himself.\*

In the last sequence of *Room at the Top* an expensive new car carries Joe Lampton and his young bride, formerly Miss Susan Brown, away from the magnificent, gloomy church where they have been married. A slow, tired tear rolls down Joe's cheek. But the Joe Lampton who could enjoy life and be happy no longer exists. 'It wasn't that I was already dead, simply I began to die then', says the hero of the novel about himself, ten years later.

The novel is written in the form of a confession by Joe Lampton. The producers of the film rejected Joe's agitated autobiographical commentary and stress more sharply the social themes of the novel in the hope that the dry, clear logic of the unfolding action of the film story will itself suggest the necessary general conclusion. For this purpose they adapted the material of the novel freely, and thus the scenes in the church and in the car, which don't exist in the novel, end the film. It looks at first as if they are a repetition of the ending of Maupassant's *Bel-Ami*. In meaning, however, they are the exact opposite.

The young man of the 19th century died if he opposed bourgeois society. He was victorious if he knew how to identify himself with it completely. Georges Duroy is an expression of that stage of development of the hero of the post-Napoleonic period, when in place of the revolutionary plebs who dreamed of conquering society came the petty bourgeois of the Third Republic, who dreamed only of how to become a big bourgeois. Georges Duroy is flesh of the flesh of that society, whose steps he confidently climbed, spurred on by his peasant greed, determined to achieve his goal. As he leaves the church arm in arm with his Suzanne, remembering the curls of Mme de Marelle, he receives everything he wanted and could want from life. But when Joe Lampton leaves the church with his Susan and thinks of Alice's death he feels bankrupt.

There is a touch of irony: his naive young wife, who has brought him millions and spiritual emptiness, is certain her husband is shedding tears of joy. But in fact they are the tears of a final spiritual pain. He cries not only for his dead mistress, but also for himself, for Joe Lampton, who found his spiritual death in the car crash that killed Alice Aisgill.

The old classic collision of bourgeois society now takes place under new historical conditions with a new aspect. Previously the meaning of the conflict lay in achieving success, in struggling for it. But today's hero finds that the very goal of his struggle—success itself—is in the end discredited—even if he doesn't willingly give up the struggle at the very beginning, as Charles Lumley did, or does not avoid it, like Lucky Jim; even if he behaves according to all the rules of the bourgeois game.

No, Joe Lampton will not, like Jim Porter, the hero of *Look Back in Anger*, take his wife away from her circle of respectable relations to that very garret that was mistakenly put in the (Russian) title of this film. He will take possession of his 'room at the top', acquired at such a high price. But he is as far away from Dufton, where he will never return, as he is from Warley, where he will always feel himself a stranger. His tragedy is the same as that reflected in different versions in the first novels of Amis and Wain, and in John Osborne's first play.

The producers intentionally found a pretext to take Joe Lampton back briefly to Dufton. All Joe's past is embodied in the poor and dirty working-class town of Dufton. But the new Joe Lampton, in his elegant suit, looks hopelessly out of place in the narrow cobble-stoned back street, with washing hanging across it and small children, like unwanted urchins, wandering aimlessly around. He is a stranger to the little slum girl playing in the ruins of a bombed-out house. He is a stranger in the poor, overcrowded rooms of his aunt, full

---

\* Translated from the French.



of the weird little animals that his uncle likes to make in his spare time, although he had taken one such little dog to Warley with him as a memory of his childhood.

'Look for a girl in your own circle' his aunt sensibly advises. Later, when, after hearing of Alice's death, he gets blind drunk in the first pub he comes across and tries to pick up the first girl he sees, he hears the same words from her boy friend: 'Look for a girl in your own circle and leave ours alone.'

But what, in fact, is his circle? He rejects the wretchedness and dirt of Dufton just as he rejects the foolish boasting and snobbishness of the respectable bosses of Warley. He can enter their circle, but he cannot become one of them even when he is spiritually dead. Just like Osborne's and Wain's heroes, he remains fatally alone.

Such is the intention of the film, and that is why, despite the apparent traditionalism of the collision, it is possible to write here of a serious attempt to create a contemporary conflict and contemporary character.

Unfortunately a lot remains intention, which may easily be read from the clear and neatly drawn themes (like the repeated references to 'your own circle'), but which by no means always finds as valid expression in the artistic fabric of the film. At times the lines of the plot are too threadbare, and the contrast between the two worlds, where Joe finds himself, looks too obviously staged.

Above all, the image of Warley itself is not a success. For Braine's hero this is not just a geographical spot on which he decided to vest his choice. It is the town of his dreams, which he sets out to conquer. It is a whole concept, as definite as Dufton, the town of his childhood. But in the film it is a rather neutral location for the action of the story.

The organic quality and integrity of style which was so attractive in Tony Richardson's work as director of the play *Look Back in Anger* is not sufficient for the pictorial solution of the film (cameraman Freddie Francis, art director Ralph Brinton). Of the two equally important components of this style, defined by the English critics as 'poetic naturalism', the film has rather more naturalism and at times not enough poetry.

Laurence Harvey's performance has undoubted merit in that he does not simply act the lover, which would have been so tempting in the circumstances. He is not afraid of the features of typicality, nor of making Joe Lampton awkward, and at times even ridiculous. His constraint in the unfamiliar surroundings of the sophisticated amateur drama circle, where he meets both Susan and Alice, and his plebeian pride and feeling of his own worth when he comes up against the blatant insolence of Susan's fiancé Jack tell us more about his past than any biographical notes.

However, despite the honesty and realistic exactness of his performance, Harvey does not attain the degree of enthusiasm and protest which made Jimmy Porter, played by Richard Pascoe, into not only a living human person, but also into an entirely new contemporary character.

The advantage here is with the hero of the novel. Laurence Harvey's Joe, reasonably good-looking, lacks the significant Lampton charm to which the author so often draws attention. I think the nature of this charm lies in the depth and sincerity of Lampton's feelings, however shortlived they may be. The truth of the matter is that Joe Lampton is not a villain, not even a convinced fortune-hunter like Clyde Griffiths. He is drawn to the bourgeois way of life but despises it.

Laurence Harvey fails to bring out the complexity of the inner world of the character, who, in his pursuit of success, is more often the passive victim of circumstances than their master. At best he portrays Joe Lampton honestly, but he does not reveal his inner being. This may to some extent explain the reproach of traditionality made against this film by some of our critics, for the actor shows us more the ugly and inconsistent actions of the character rather

than explaining his true psychology. For the British audience (as so often happens with screen versions in our own cinema) the novel probably sheds additional light on Joe, 'the rebellious unhero of the fifties', as Joe Lampton has been wittily called by a British critic ; but the actor lacks this 'rebelliousness' too much to create a fully typical character.

The only complete character in this good—(though it rarely rises above being just good)—film was that created by Simone Signoret. The credit must go completely to the actress, since in the novel Alice Aisgill is not given the place she rightfully takes in the film.

There are two women in Joe Lampton's life—Susan Brown, with all the charm of her youth and her expensive but modest clothes ; and Alice Aisgill, a woman in her late thirties, with fading beauty, unhappy life, and spiritual lassitude.

I don't want to insist that it was the producers' intention, but Susan Brown looks a stupid ninny beside Alice Aisgill. Apparently, in sharpening the social themes of the novel, they wanted to show that Susan's 'top quality' lay not within herself but in her wealth. If so, they succeeded in producing the impression they desired by making her not only sweet and babyish, but at times even ridiculous in her babyishness. This contrasts strongly with Simone Signoret's severe performance.

I am not afraid to claim that Alice Aisgill is the best role in which we have seen this fine actress. She gives the film much more than the theme of an unhappy, ageing woman's last desperate and tender love affair, which in the novel sums up the character of Alice. She acts not a love affair but life. The entire life of this woman, all her disappointments and defeats, her unspent spiritual strength, her womanly wisdom and bitterness, and the truth gained through suffering—all this is put into this last love affair. This time Simone Signoret rejected the intriguing air of enigma that used to surround her in many of her previous films. The solution proved simpler and better than the enigma.

One can also consider the character created by Simone Signoret as a modern one if only because she belongs to those who reject outright all the bourgeois illusions of her own circle. A bored woman, who from boredom joins the amateur drama circle, who smokes, drinks brandy, and easily and quickly—more quickly than Joe himself had wanted—agrees to an affair with him ; a bored, secure and immoral woman, but still capable of deep feeling—that is how Alice may appear at an inattentive first glance. But she smokes, drinks and doesn't know what to do with herself, just as the characters of Hemingway or Remarque smoke, drink and don't know what to do with themselves. And if in Joe, with his too early disillusionment and moral weariness, we find the features of the 'angry' generation, then in her we see all the marks of a 'lost' generation.

The truthfulness of human emotions that do not need to be covered up, the courage to look life straight in the eye—these are what Simone Signoret brings to this film. Her Alice does not try to hide her wrinkles under a layer of cosmetics. And in exactly the same way she does not hide her feelings, does not try to adorn them with coquetry, although she is a good ten years older than her lover. She is open and simple in her love, emotions and thoughts. Life has taught her to value only true values, and she can no longer accept secrecy and deceit. She regards Joe's senseless outburst of jealousy because she was once an artist's model as insulting hypocrisy. Who cared what she went through in her uneasy years until she became the secure but unhappy wife of her wealthy husband ?

Simone Signoret's Alice knows perhaps even less than Joe Lampton how to live, and what road to take. She is unhappy and frustrated. Life has passed her by senselessly, and she has nothing to show for it. A cigarette, a glass of brandy, a part in amateur dramatics—anything to lose herself. But this is before

she meets Joe. Having met him, she understands ; she no longer wants lies, banality and respectable deceit. She does not want half feelings and mutual pretence. There is reason for Joe telling her ' You are brave.' She is very brave, too brave and open for this bourgeois life of convential morality and generally accepted lies.

She belongs to that group of the ' lost generation ' who, having lost any social ideal, still value loyalty in love and friendship, human worth and courage. This is their hopeless but stubborn stoicism. She gives all this to Joe Lampton when she goes with him to a country cottage (this short, at times amusing, idyll beneath the pouring rain is among the best episodes in the film), and when, disregarding all possible consequences, she agrees to become Joe's lawful wife.

With what joy she meets her future husband back in town, only to hear his dry words—that he is marrying Susan Brown ; Susan is expecting his child. Alice's husband won't give her a divorce. There is no way out.

At this moment everything ends for Alice. She belongs to a generation still capable of tragedy. Her last lonely evening in the pub and the final, silent, critical look in the mirror before she gets behind the wheel of the car that carries her to her death—that too is a contemporary expression of what is tragic, tragic without any posing, tragic without loud phrases.

That for which Alice paid with her life, Joe will go on paying for with his living soul and the tears that run down his face when he sits in his new car next to Susan. The futile bitterness of irony and cold solitude—that is all that is left for this descendant of Julien Sorel. He was himself only with Alice, and he lost himself when he lost her.

The film has a lot of shortcomings. Perhaps they are even greater than its merits ; but here British cinema for the first time in recent years has drawn close to a social theme and a contemporary hero. In writing of *Room at the Top* one may repeat James Aldridge's words about Osborne and Shelagh Delaney : ' Before the tired eyes of our worried, fading society will come a new Fielding or new Shaw ; in the meantime the young writers prepare the ground for him, and for this we . . . must be grateful.'\*

—*Iskusstvo kino*, No. 2, 1960.  
Translated by L.R.

\* Retranslated from Russian.

## **SCR Library**

***Postal lending service to all  
parts of Great Britain***

***Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays  
1-7 p.m., Tuesdays, Thursdays and  
Fridays 1-6 p.m.***

# THE LEGACY OF WILLIAM MORRIS

B. Shragin

This article was published originally in the Soviet journal *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo v SSSR*, No. 5, 1960. In presenting it the editors said that it did not pretend to deal exhaustively with the pressing artistic and æsthetic problems of studying the heritage of William Morris, but could only be considered an attempt to pose some of them. They noted that the role of William Morris in the development of modern decorative art has scarcely been discussed in Soviet literature, and that he is known in the USSR mainly as a poet and not as a master and theoretician of the decorative arts; they called attention to the need for an all-round study of his heritage.

'It can hardly be considered normal', they wrote, 'that the works of Morris, with the exception of his novel *News from Nowhere*, have not been translated into Russian. Morris's theoretical works', concluded the editors, 'must be published in Russian, and must be taken into the equipment of our decorative art.' Recently a one-volume edition of his selected works was published in Moscow, which includes some but not all of his theoretical works on art, and is making his work known to a wide circle of Soviet readers.

We are sure that our readers will be happy to learn of this growing interest and appreciation in the USSR of the work and ideas of William Morris.

**W**ITHOUT history there can be no theory—this truth undoubtedly applies to the theory of *modern* decorative art. Study of the laws and the social stimuli of the *formation* of contemporary decorative art is a pressing necessity.

It begins with William Morris. The name of William Morris occupies a significant and lasting place in the most varied fields of British social and cultural life in the second half of the 19th century: in poetry, the novel, and the socialist movement.

In the history of the decorative arts, the role of Morris is even greater, even more remarkable. Here he stands forth as the initiator of a new tradition in regard to which all the great masters of later years are his pupils and acknowledge their apprenticeship with gratitude.

Bourgeois æsthetics cannot deny the peculiar and exceptional role of Morris in the development of contemporary decorative art. He is called 'the true prophet of the 20th century, the father of the modern trend'. Nevertheless, the bourgeois art critics are obliged—in view of the general high estimation of Morris's work—to utter with striking unanimity a very significant 'but'.

Many and various authors, from the apostles of anarchism to respectable professors of æsthetics, have taken part in the creation of the 'Morris legend', the legend of the fruitless dreamer, the somewhat eccentric admirer of the Gothic past and medieval mysticism who, in the age of industrialism, attempted to revive the handicrafts of the Middle Ages.

In 1912 Chesterton wrote that Morris's disadvantage was that he was not a good son of the 19th century, that he could not understand its fascination, and consequently was incapable of developing its trend in his own time. And Herbert Read remarks on Morris's lack of a realist approach, and considers that Morris's position was bedevilled by æsthetic considerations.

It is enough to read the theoretical work of Morris himself to be convinced, to put it mildly, of the complete groundlessness of this bourgeois 'legend'.

The imaginary 'lack of a realist approach' ascribed to Morris in fact consists merely in the fact that he linked decorative art indissolubly with socialism, that he argued the inevitability of a crisis in decorative art in capitalist society and called for a socialist revolution, which alone could rescue beauty. His æsthetic outlook can be regarded as a dream only by those who consider the socialist world outlook a 'dream'.

Morris's innovations in decorative art are inseparable from the idea of socialism, and they can only be understood and accepted in our day from a socialist standpoint. The Morris tradition in modern decorative art is a socialist tradition.

There are two camps in the world—the capitalist and the socialist. There are also two camps in the decorative arts. The 'Morris legend' is one aspect of the bourgeois struggle against socialism, and without unmasking it it is difficult to understand the difference between the bourgeois and socialist trends in the art of our time.

The 'Morris legend' identifies him completely with the feudal utopian preaching of John Ruskin, and, in fact, this ideological leader of the pre-Raphaelites had an enormous influence on Morris's outlook. In his eloquent books, Ruskin revealed the popular character of medieval culture. He wounded the bourgeoisie to the quick by his criticism of the crudity, clumsiness, lack of taste and eclecticism of everything created by their way of life. However, from his criticism of the bourgeois order and bourgeois art Ruskin drew extremely reactionary conclusions. He idealised feudal society, demanded its restoration, and called for the repudiation of all the achievements of the civilisation of modern times. In particular Ruskin saw the replacement of hand labour by the machine as the cause for the decline of the arts and crafts.

Ruskin's ideas merely gave a jolt to Morris's independent search for new modes of development in the decorative arts. Ruskin helped Morris to realise their significance in the life of the people and aroused in his energetic spirit an unbearable dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs. With Morris, to say was to do. As soon as he realised the ugliness of the general run of machine-made articles of his time he could no longer live and work among them.

So when, in 1857, he set up his first workshop he made the furniture for it himself. Thus, in a completely natural manner, out of the depths of his personal needs, Morris was drawn to the decorative arts.

In 1859 his friend Webb, the architect, designed a house for him, the famous 'Red House', which was a turning point in the development not only of European decorative art, but also of architecture. The furnishings of the house, all its artistic appointments, were made by the hands of Morris and his friends. The fact that the facade had no decoration of any kind also heightened the æsthetic effect of the very texture of the red brick and was a genuine revelation in those days of 'Empire' dominance.

Simplicity of decorative form became from then on the object of intense search by Morris. 'All art starts from this simplicity', he remarked some time later, 'and the higher the art rises, the greater the simplicity.'\* '*Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful*'†—that was one of Morris's basic principles, which he opposed to the tasteless luxury of the bourgeoisie of the 19th century.

Morris was no exquisite aesthete, anxious merely about the beauty of his personal environment. His dream was the affirmation of beauty in the whole life of the people, to draw all men's hearts to it. The erection of the 'Red

---

\* *William Morris*. Centenary edition. Nonesuch Press, 1956, p. 562.

† *ibid*, p. 561. All subsequent quotations are from this edition.



House', therefore, was for him the first step in the organisation of big industrial workshops dedicated to the production of many different decorative articles. Furniture, ceramics, metals, wallpapers, carpets, glassware, coloured tiles, printed cloth, decorative fabrics, embroidery, printing—all were prepared in the Morris workshops, and the whole was controlled by Morris himself as the artist, striving to execute every article in material with his own hands. He even dyed the yarns for his carpets himself; a loom stood in his bedroom for many years.

From the very start Morris became an artist of the decorative arts in the modern sense of the term. Into these then abandoned and neglected arts he brought with him his wide æsthetic culture, his universal knowledge of history, his progressive outlook. It is in this, first and foremost, that his role of innovator resides, and by this that he is sharply distinguished from his teacher. Unlike Ruskin, Morris never dreamed of a simple rebirth of medieval handicrafts. Already in the very first of his lectures on the decorative arts he firmly declared that the ancient art—'the art of unconscious intelligence' as he aptly termed it—was dead. 'What little of it is left', he said, 'lingers among half-civilised nations, and is growing coarser and feebler . . . year by year.' The ancient art must yield place to 'a new art of conscious intelligence', which is linked with 'the birth of wiser, simpler, freer ways of life than the world leads now, than the world has ever led' (p. 502).

Morris's position on this question is shown with extreme clarity in the struggle he waged against the attempts so fashionable in the second half of the 19th century to 'revive' ancient architecture. Morris ridiculed the 'restorers', to whom it seemed that 'while all things else have changed about us since (say) the 13th century, art has not changed, and our workmen can turn out work identical with that of the 13th century' (p. 555).

These ideas of Morris were so far removed from the preaching of Ruskin, so completely alien to all senseless reverence for the past, that they can be thrown into the present-day balance in our disputes with the 'restorers', occupied with the fruitless job of copying the art of past ages.

True, in Morris's creative practice, Gothic, Arabic and other medieval ornamental motifs are to be noted. But there is no real contradiction here. Standing at the very head of the new tradition, being one of the foremost artists of the 19th century, devoting himself to the decorative arts after many years when they had been considered second- and even third-class arts, seeing around him a whole sea of tasteless, coarse and worthless objects, he naturally must have striven deeply and creatively to assimilate what had already been achieved by humanity in the art of everyday objects.

Morris emphasised that the decorative artist must study history. 'I do not think that any man but one of the highest genius could do anything in these days without much study of ancient art. . . . If you think that this contradicts what I said about the death of that ancient art . . . I can only say that, in these times of plenteous knowledge and meagre performance, if we do not study the ancient work directly and learn to understand it, we shall find ourselves influenced by the feeble work around us. . . . Let us therefore study it wisely, be taught by it, kindled by it; all the while determining not to imitate or repeat it; to have either no art at all, or an art which we have made our own' (p. 505).

Without Morris's enormous preparatory work it would have been impossible for subsequent generations to advance to the creation of original contemporary decorative forms. More important still, however, is that Morris was able to comprehend the essence of the aim and destiny of the decorative arts in a wide socialist sense. It was by this that he laid the foundations of the socialist tradition in these arts, and at this juncture his legacy is especially important for us.

It is from this aspect that his outlook disposes of the 'legend' surrounding him.

Morris understood that it was impossible to re-create the decorative arts in isolation, that their flowering or decline depended on the conditions of life and labour and the cultural standard of the whole population. So he carried his activities beyond the walls of his workshop into a wider social arena. From the end of the seventies he frequently lectured and wrote on questions of decorative art. As a result of his activities schools and societies of arts came into being throughout England. The best known of these was the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, of which he was the first president, and which exerted an influence on the whole European continent through its exhibitions. Morris's creative force, which had begun with furnishing his personal workshop and house, acquired an international, world significance.

'Real art is the expression by man of his pleasure in labour' (p. 530)—that is the basic principle of his æsthetic outlook. It helped him to understand that art cannot be a matter only of painting and sculpture, not merely the intellectual arts, as he called them, but can exist in all forms of human labour in which the demands of creativeness are met ; by means of which a unique and real enjoyment and happiness are attained. This principle, taken in the first place from Ruskin, acquired an ever more radical political meaning in Morris's study of the decorative arts.

Free, creative labour, labour as a pleasure, is a necessary condition for the flowering of the arts. The decorative arts, born of such labour, form a broad basis for the whole world of beauty. Only then, when all the people through their daily work have a share in art and beauty, will the life of men and all their surroundings acquire a lofty æsthetic meaning. Thus the transformation of labour into a heavy burden, into a joyless, mechanical daily and hourly repetition of the same action, spells death for the decorative arts and all the arts.

'The lack of art, or rather the murder of art, that curses our streets from the sordidness of the surroundings of the lower classes, has its exact counterpart in the dullness and vulgarity of those of the middle classes and the double-distilled dullness and scarcely less vulgarity of those of the upper classes. On the one hand the mass of people are deprived of any semblance of beauty and completely cut off from art ; and on the other, the "chosen", "upper" classes begin to look on art as an amusement, at best a trifle ; and the "connoisseur" of art, who has toured Italy and can discourse on the painting of Raphael, even reconciles himself to the most tasteless and vapid luxury in his home' (p. 549).

At one extreme the ignorance of the masses, and at the other barren 'pure art' ; such in Morris's opinion was the inevitable result of the decline of the decorative arts, which in turn ensued from the whole totality of the conditions of bourgeois civilisation.

Hence the colossal importance that Morris attached to the decorative arts.

'... Only let the arts which we are talking of beautify our labour, and be widely spread, intelligent, well understood both by the maker and the user, let them grow, in one word, *popular*, and there will be pretty much an end of dull work and its wearing slavery ; and no man will any longer have an excuse for talking about the curse of labour, no man will any longer have an excuse for evading the blessing of labour. I believe there is nothing that will aid the world's progress so much as the attainment of this ; I protest there is nothing in the world that I desire so much as this, wrapped up, as I am sure it is, with changes political and social, that in one way or another we all desire' (pp. 496-7).

Morris saw that realisation of the tasks posed by him demanded political and social changes. Still more, from his very first steps as a theoretician he already clearly understood the need to establish 'equality of conditions'—that is, socialism. 'Men will then assuredly be happy in their work, and that happiness will assuredly bring forth decorative, noble, *popular* art' (p. 515).

At first, however, it seemed to him, as it had to countless other utopians, that to establish real equality it was sufficient to enlighten men, to educate them æsthetically, to reveal to them the ugliness and absurdity of their lives. Morris got entangled in insoluble contradictions : on the one hand he already realised that it was useless to educate people whose aggregate conditions of life pushed them towards ugliness and tastelessness (in this respect he was already then beyond the bourgeois schemers who still drew up more and more new plans for 'æsthetic education') ; on the other hand he could find no other means but education.

Here is a very characteristic passage in relation to this, from his lecture 'The Beauty of Life' (1880) : ' . . . that education does not end when people leave school is now a mere commonplace ; and how then can you really educate men who lead the life of machines, who only think for the few hours during which they are not at work, who, in short, spend almost their whole lives doing work which is not proper for developing them body and mind in some worthy way ? You cannot educate, you cannot civilise men, unless you can give them a share in art.

'Yes, and it is hard indeed as things go to give most men that share ; for they do not miss it, or ask for it, and it is impossible as things are that they should either miss or ask for it. Nevertheless everything has a beginning, and many great things have had very small ones ; and since, as I have said, these ideas are already abroad in more than one form, we must not be too much discouraged at the seemingly boundless weight we have to lift ' (p. 549).

'Therefore', concluded Morris, 'let us work and faint not . . . ' (p. 550).

Courage and enthusiasm Morris always had in plenty. However, sober and profound analysis of the real position of art in capitalist society could not but convince him that courage and enthusiasm alone were too little for the attainment of his aim.

Consciousness of this led Morris to the camp of socialism. In 1883 he joined the socialist organisation and gave himself energetically to the party work for which he was most suited.

Later, relating his reasons for joining the socialist movement, Morris confessed that he had passed through short periods of political radicalism, during which he had seen his ideal quite clearly but had no hope of realising it. Only socialism presented a solid basis for his æsthetic outlook and his understanding of the essence and tasks of the decorative arts. His passage to socialism meant for Morris the attainment of maturity and the completion of his position in art. Therefore to examine his æsthetics outside his socialist view of the world, as all bourgeois historians, without exception, do, is a deliberate falsification.

As an artist, Morris found the road to socialism by his own particular difficult path. He really achieved his socialist world outlook through suffering ; and that he discovered the great social, historical significance of the decorative arts, that he was able to attract a whole army of great artists to work in this field, that he really became the 'father of the modern trend' in decorative art, is all indisputably linked with socialism.

Bourgeois historians, creating their 'Morris legend', studiously ignore the fact that his passage to socialism was directly due to the influence of Marx. It was precisely in 1883 that Morris first read *Capital*, to which he returned later. He also knew of other works by the founders of scientific communism. In his lectures and articles he always spoke of Marxism with great respect. In all his theoretical works, in all his activities as a socialist, it is quite clear that he identified himself with the Marxist tradition in socialism.

True, in practical party work Morris tolerated a lot of mistakes. Engels wrote in his letters of his wretched politics, but at the same time remarked on his sincerity, and ironically called him the embodiment of good will and socialist sentiment, and so forth.

Morris was not, of course, a completely formed Marxist, but his æsthetic conception and his basic points are close to Marxism. Nicholas Pevsner's statement that Morris's socialism was closer to that of Sir Thomas More than of Marx is manifestly tendentious.

Characteristically, in this period of development, after he had become a socialist, Morris never came out against machine technique as such. Where Ruskin restricted himself to metaphors and declaimed against modern industry as mammon, Morris, relying on the ideas of *Capital*, was able to establish the real, social picture of the development of new technique, and to disclose the real reasons for the degradation of the decorative arts under capitalism.

Capitalism, and not the machine, reduced the worker to an appendage of self-profit. The new factory system did not seem to Morris in any way anti-æsthetic in its essentials.

'The socialisation of labour, which ought to have been a blessing to the community, had been turned into a curse by the appropriation of the products of its labour by individuals' (p. 651). 'Our epoch', said Morris, 'has invented machines which would have appeared wild dreams to the men of past ages, and of those machines we have as yet *made no use*' (p. 651). The true *human* use of machines should be to save labour, but capitalism uses them to reduce skilled work to unskilled, to intensify the labour of those who serve the machines to increase the number of the 'reserve army of labour'.

Only socialism can transform the machine into a positive factor in a man's spiritual development and the formation of his art. 'We must be masters of our machines and not their servants.' Man must not be an appendage of the machine, but the machine of him. Having become the instrument of the proletariat, a tool for building socialist society, the machine will make it possible to reduce labour, subordinate it to the requirements of life, and open to mankind a wide field of intellectual effort.

In his remarkable article 'A Factory as It Might Be' Morris created an amazingly true picture of the æsthetic possibilities of the machine in industry, in a classless society.

The working day of the future would be extremely short, not more than four hours. 'Now . . . it may be allowable for an artist—that is, one whose ordinary work is pleasant and not slavish—to hope that in no factory will all the work, even that necessary four hours' work, be mere machine-tending ; and it follows from what has been said about machines being used to save labour that there would be no work which would turn men into mere machines ; therefore at least some portion of the work, the necessary and in fact compulsory work, I mean, would be pleasant to do' (p. 650).

Such a factory will not only not deprive people of the joy of creation, 'but furthermore, the organisation of such a factory, that is to say of a group of people working in harmonious co-operation towards a useful end, would of itself afford opportunities for increasing the pleasure of life' (p. 651).

The factory of the future will become a centre of the whole life of the people, because the main thing for them will be their work. Around it will be public gardens, buildings for libraries, schools, public dining-halls and the like. Having received a labour training, combining study with work in the factory, the children of the future society from the very beginning will be able to develop their æsthetic feeling, which can normally develop only on the basis of creative labour. Art, therefore, will become a national possession. 'Art of the people, for the people'—such was Morris's slogan.

'To add beauty to their necessary daily work will furnish outlets for the artistic aspirations of most men ; but, further, our factory which is externally beautiful will not be inside like a clean jail or workhouse ; the architecture will come inside in the form of such ornament as may be suitable to the special circumstances. Nor can I see why the highest and most intellectual art, pictures,

sculpture and the like should not adorn a true palace of industry . . .' (p. 654).

In Morris's time machine technique had not yet developed so far as to open up scope for creative work to every individual. Morris therefore saw the main function of machine production as the freeing of human energy for artistic pursuits. He did not create an æsthetics of the machine, and did not seek the source of new progress in the decorative arts in the application of machine technique as such. *He expected the flowering of art from the free development of the human personality, from the free creative work of men in socialist society.* And assuredly the guarantee of progressive, socialist decorative art today, in all its forms, both hand- and machine-made, lies in this.

Bourgeois historians and theoreticians cannot understand the real essence of Morris's outlook, because, and only because, his whole world outlook in its entirety—all the studies he promoted concerning the essence and the historic destiny of the decorative arts—is alien to them.

Speaking of the 'modern' forms of decorative art works, bourgeois æsthetics sees their source in the machine, in modern machine technique taken in isolation from the concrete, historical conditions of its development. This 'technicism' leads to the idea that it is not man who does and must create new art, but the new machines and the new materials, quite mechanically and without man's will engendering it.

That was not Morris's view and was totally unlike it. 'We must be masters of our machines and not their slaves.' This idea is most important for the fate of the decorative arts, and is, in principle, alien to a bourgeois way of life and bourgeois consciousness. And therefore, to bourgeois art critics, it appears that Morris disparaged the role of the machine in modern artistic creation, whereas he indicated its authentic role. It seemed to them that Morris wished to return to medieval times when indeed he was looking to the future and only wanted the creative forces of humanity to be assigned their rightful place throughout the whole system of modern production, so that, having assimilated the best traditions of the past, we should create such beauty the like of which the world has not yet seen.

Strange, but instructive confusion ! Behind it is hidden the gulf that separates the socialist and bourgeois understanding of the problem of the decorative arts today.

When Morris died in 1896, a member of the Social-Democratic Federation of Great Britain wrote that comrade Morris was not dead. Not one socialist would believe him dead, because he lived in the hearts of all real men and women, and would do so for all time. And we can say today : Morris's cause lives, his great tradition lives. The legacy of William Morris belongs to the decorative arts of socialism.

Translated by M.C.



## AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER

By David Garrick

*TWO letters written by David Garrick, the English actor, have recently been discovered in the State History Museum in Moscow by M. V. Budylna.*

*One is a short note (undated, but written from the Adelphi, that is after 1770) to James Macpherson, the Scottish poet, in which Garrick replies to an invitation to dine with Macpherson and expresses his willingness to accompany the poet's friends.\**

*The second letter,† dated April 15, 1773, is addressed to l'Abbe Morellet (1727-1819), the French literary philosopher and man of letters, who contributed to the 'Encyclopaedia.'*

*It is a reply to a letter from Morellet of April 5, 1773, asking Garrick to find out from their mutual friend Hawkesworth why he has not sent Morellet even a single volume of his book TRAVELS ROUND THE WORLD, which Morellet and Suard had arranged to translate into French.*

*Below we publish the text of Garrick's letter as reproduced in the Year Book of the Institute of the History of Art : Theatre, 1959. (Ezhgodnik instituta istorii iskusstva), with three emendations which are noted in footnotes.*

Adelphi,  
Friday, April 15, 1773.  
Hampton.

My dear Morellet,

I received your letter yesterday and sent a man away with it directly to our friend Dr. Hawkesworth.—He sent me word that he should send over the copy and the plates by the first conveyance as you will see by the enclosed note.—You must know, my dear friend, that the Dr. is chosen as India Director—we have all been at work for him, & his good character with the good offices of his friends have done the business. He has been indeed very busy since the election & I suppose has neglected your affair among a hundred others. I must desire you for the future to write directly to him about this business between you ; for I have rather been angry with him, for not sending to you sooner. He has some excuse of late on account of his late fatigue & success at the India house ; but I can't bear neglect for my friends & myself, so I fairly told him with some warmth—therefore I once more entreat you to write to him directly or whenever you please, but say nothing of what I have told you above that passed between us. His address now must be to John Hawkesworth Esqr at the India house, Leaden Hall Street,‡ London, or you may direct your letter in French which will be the same thing—don't imagine that I want to spare any pains to serve you, or oblige you, but I have been vexed about this matter & could wish (unless you or my good friend Suard think otherwise) that this particular business was transacted between yourselves ; for any other I am always & ever shall be at your & his service. Will you do me a favour to ask Monsr Lekain if he did not recommend a Mr. Bedel to my notice ; there was likewise a note from Mad-lle Dumesnil to the same purpose. He came to me, I did him all the service in my power for so short a time & recommended him too in writing (which I seldom do). He promised to call upon me to take an answer to Mr. Lekain, but he never called since, nor has had the complaisance to send a note. I am vexed about it.

When you see the divine Clairon, give her an affectionate salute for me with a gentle squeeze for love & honour her. I shall send her a love letter by Mad-lle Heinel—who is a delicious young woman ! Pray let the Baron d' Holbach & Mad-e la Baronne know, they are always in the minds & hearts

\* State History Museum, G.V. Orlov collection, file 20, no. 48.

† *idem*, file 20, no. 54.

‡ Reproduced as " Leader Hall Street " in the Year Book, seemingly through misreading of Garrick's handwriting.

of the Garricks. Need\* I desire you to remember me to the choice spirits I used to converse with in the most affectionate manner—the Diderots, Grimm, Marmontels, etc., etc., etc., . . . & especially to Messrs & Made Suard the last of whom I was wise enough to be in love with, before he was. I have read† the 2-d letter to Voltaire by Clement—is it not tiresome and dull ! If this young man is one of the rising Geniuses—*Damnosa quid non imminuit Dies ?* & alas poor France !—Ever thine

most affectionately

D. GARRICK

Mrs. Garrick sends her best wishes to all & everyone !

---

\* Printed 'send', but again another mistake in deciphering Garrick's hand.

† Printed as 'nead', clearly a misreading of Garrick's handwriting.

## Gramophone Reviews

### SHOSTAKOVICH MASTERPIECES

**Shostakovich: Fifth Symphony**, D02283/4; **Tenth Symphony**, D02243/4; **Piano Quintet**, D2620(a), available from Collet's, 28/8; **Violin Concerto**, D03658(a), available from Collet's, 36/3.

It is a great pleasure to review simultaneously recent Soviet recordings of the four major works of Shostakovich on which his fame as a 20th-century master is most likely to rest, namely the Fifth and Tenth Symphonies, the Piano Quintet and the Violin Concerto.

Shostakovich's maturity as a composer may be said to date from 1937, the year of the completion of his Fifth Symphony. The circumstances of its composition, as 'a Soviet composer's reply to just criticism', are too well known to need retelling here. Sufficient time has now elapsed, however, to enable us to listen to the work on its own merits, without the distraction of the controversy associated with its first appearance.

Since 1938 it has found a permanent place in the repertoire of many of the great orchestras of the world, and its influence on other composers is extensive (including, on his own admission, our own Benjamin Britten). The artistic maturity that it reveals may be seen in the wide range of emotional experience that is reflected, presented in a language rich and colourful but never extravagant; the hysterical element—so disturbing in his earlier work, even in the astonishing First Symphony, composed when he was 19—has now been overcome, and we feel we are in the presence of a passionate and sensitive, but nevertheless civilised, human being. Only those whose political prejudice blinds them to artistic truth could deny these

qualities and assert that Shostakovich's soul was destroyed by bureaucratic interference.

This recording by the Leningrad State Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Mravinsky stresses the classical and controlled aspect of the work, in sharp contrast to its first recording before the war, the highly romantic and vulgar version of Stokowski and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra. It must, however, be confessed that the clarity and sensitivity of the recording have been achieved at the expense of some of the passion. The Soviet custom of recording in small studios with little reverberation and employing a fairly small body of strings intensifies this feature of Mravinsky's performance.

That the intimate and reflective Piano Quintet of 1940 should have been awarded a Stalin Prize at a time of intense patriotic fervour is evidence of a responsible attitude shown by the then musical advisers to the Soviet Government, whatever may have been their crimes and stupidities on other occasions.

It is not surprising that Shostakovich should have turned more and more to chamber music after he had discarded the melodramatic attitudes of his early phase. The six string quartets, the piano quintet and the twenty-four preludes and fugues which all belong to his maturity have been slower in making their impact on the musical world than have his epic symphonies, not only because of their intimate and subtle nature but also because of the extreme scarcity of the printed scores needed for performance. The Piano Quintet has had the advantage of several excellent recordings in recent years,

which have succeeded in establishing the work as one of the great masterpieces of 20th-century chamber music.

The classical clarity of texture which begins to appear in the Fifth Symphony is here all-pervasive and reflects a calm, confident but never introspective state of mind. Even the scherzo reveals the full measure of its strength by restraint rather than by moving mountains. The finale expresses a joy, all the deeper because it does not have to be shouted, that has scarcely been heard in any music since Schubert. But it is in the great fugue of the second movement that Shostakovich reveals an aspect of his greatness that could never have been surmised from his earlier work, a spiritual quality as profound as that to be found in the first movement of Beethoven's C Sharp Minor Quartet, expressed through counterpoint of great subtlety and complexity.

In spite of the authoritative nature of this recording, with the composer himself at the piano, it is impossible to avoid some disappointment. All the movements are played faster than is usual and the gain in formal unity so achieved is, in my opinion, more than offset by a general superficiality of effect and even a sense of impatience.

The Tenth Symphony of 1955 is perhaps Shostakovich's greatest large-scale work. It shares the epic quality of the Fifth but is more precise in its expression. The first movement in particular possesses an organic unity unsurpassed by Shostakovich himself, or indeed by any other modern symphonic composer, with the possible exception of Sibelius. It is in many ways the culmination of his symphonic thought; hints of it appear in earlier works such as the D minor fugue in the Twenty-Four, and it is echoed

in subsequent works such as the scherzo of the Eleventh Symphony.

In this recording, again by the Leningrad Philharmonic and Mravinsky, the classical character of the performance is appropriate to its style and enhances its formal beauty. The finale, which had seemed to me, before hearing this recording, to be somewhat trivial and on a lower imaginative level than the rest of the work, here takes on a captivating youthful gaiety suggesting the finale of Mozart's E Flat Symphony.

The Violin Concerto of 1956 contains Shostakovich's finest lyrical writing, of a much deeper poignancy and subtlety than that of *Song of the Forest*. I must confess that I find those parts of the work designed to exploit the virtuosity of the soloist, as in the second movement and the cadenza leading into the finale, the least convincing musically, and in this respect at least inferior to the Bartok Concerto. But the culmination of the whole work is the great passacaglia, in which the rich counterpoint achieves a truly Bachian eloquence.

The lyricism and nobility of the work are conveyed perfectly in David Oistrakh's performance. The recording, however, from the acoustical point of view, while it faithfully presents his purity of phrasing and articulation, does less than justice to his magnificent tone. The orchestral playing (again by Mravinsky and the Leningrad Orchestra) is in general somewhat dry and colourless, but there are moments of magical sound, as at the end of the first movement and the opening of the passacaglia, leading into the entry of the solo violin.

BERNARD STEVENS.

# Surveys and Reviews

---

## THE GREATNESS AND DECLINE OF ENGLISH ART

A. Chegodaev

**An exhibition of 160 British paintings was shown during the summer in Moscow and Leningrad, arranged by the British Council in exchange for the exhibition of Russian and Soviet art at the Royal Academy last year. The show aroused great interest and much discussion and controversy. This article conveys some of the thoughts and reactions it provoked in one Soviet art critic. It was accompanied by reproductions of pictures by Wright of Derby, Constable, Whistler, Bacon, Nicholson and Davey.**

**T**HE greatness and decline of English art . . . . ' I had no ironic intentions in borrowing from Balzac the title of this article on the splendid exhibition of British painting at the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum in Moscow. On the contrary, this exhibition gives rise only to the most serious, even if extremely varied, thoughts and feelings ; above all, profound admiration for the great art of the great English painters, especially Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable ; but also, after this, sad reflections on the dismal fall which has now overtaken modern English painting and which no verbal artifices can represent as the apogee of artistic development.

The chief meaning and significance of this exhibition lies, of course, in the rich and striking impression created by the excellent selection of paintings by artists of the flowering of English art—from Hogarth to Whistler. Strictly speaking, the inclusion of the American, Whistler, in this exhibition is not quite 'lawful' : although he lived a long time in England he remained a stranger to the artistic atmosphere of the Victorian era surrounding him. The organisers of the exhibition, however, can be forgiven this inaccuracy for the satisfaction of seeing his excellent works in Moscow.

Hogarth was the first to bring English art on to the world scene—before him British painting was of purely local significance. Moreover, the standard of British painting of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries should not be judged by the works of the second-rate portrait painters Wootton and Highmore with which the Moscow exhibition opens : these naive epigones merely paved the way to the complete degeneration of the qualitatively much better representative style of the 17th century.

Hogarth had more serious predecessors. He deserves full credit, however, for breaking sharply away from dead traditions, for completely renewing the artistic language of English painting and giving it a broad social ring. His brilliant sketch 'Masquerade at the Wanstead Assembly' gives the best idea of his inexhaustible wit, his wicked and keen powers of observation not sparing centuries of settled customs. The grotesque expressions, full of life and humour, of the numerous persons in this painting are unexpectedly combined with the tenderest colour structure : in the delicate harmony of its grey tones and the virtuoso lightness of its execution this sketch more closely resembles 'The Shrimp Girl' than any of Hogarth's other works on view in the exhibition.

Hogarth usually made his paintings terribly dry and trivial by overloading

them with unnecessary, painstakingly drawn details ; neither was his satire always of the highest order, as is convincingly shown by the primitively chauvinistic picture 'Roast Beef of Old England'. 'The Gates of Calais' is pointlessly included in the exhibition—his ridiculing of Scottish rebels and French soldiers is not so well appreciated over here. But Hogarth's limitations and mistakes must be forgiven for the sake of the expressive and artistic strength which he first breathed into British art.

The great English portrait painters of the 18th century—Reynolds, Ramsay, Gainsborough, Raeburn, Opie—travelled the road laid down by Hogarth, and secured a leading place for England in the artistic culture of the 18th century. It was, in fact, the rich flowering of portrait painting which, as happened also in Russia, won world importance for the English art of that time ; and the organisers of the exhibition were wrong to be afraid of showing the full force of its brilliant diversity. From the few haphazard examples of their work shown it is impossible to gain any impression of the spiritual tenderness of Ramsay's intimate portraits, of Opie's intellectual depth, of Raeburn's powerful temperament, of Romney's virtuose, even though superficial, skill.

On the other hand, Reynolds and Gainsborough are extremely well represented. One sees Reynolds as he was—unusually versatile, boldly experimental, knowing the value of romantic effects, self-confident (and therefore too often unaware of his careless insipidity and even banality), not a profound or complicated artist, but one who rose at times to great and original artistic strength. He sincerely believed himself to be much better than Gainsborough, and spoke of the latter with condescending disdain. He was, however, far inferior to this amazing magician, one of the greatest painters who has ever lived.

The exhibition includes excellent works by Gainsborough (particularly the landscapes 'The Watering Place' and 'Dedham Valley'), but he is really much better and stronger. His masterpieces—'Mrs. Graham in Edinburgh', 'The Servant Girl with a Pitcher' or 'Portrait of Dupont' in London, 'Lady Beaufort' in Leningrad—are not rare exceptions in his work, which is penetrated throughout with the deepest sincerity and poetry, combining the delicate delight of silver colouring and light, free mastery of composition with the unalterable living truth of observation and a true appreciation of human character. This is shown by the portraits exhibited in Moscow—'Doctor Schomberg', 'Lady Briscoe', etc.

The inadequate selection of English 18th-century portraits is in no way compensated by the abundance of genre pictures : the genre of everyday life in 18th-century England was not really so very important. The only exception to this is Joseph Wright, of Derby, whose romantic blacksmiths' forges and scientific experiments really were both new and talented. The lachrymose genres of Morland and Wheatley, English imitators of Greuze, make little impression, however, on the viewer.

The degradation of portraiture in England at the beginning of the 19th century was offset by an extraordinary flowering of landscape painting. In the hands of such a powerful and profound artist as Constable, the landscape became a means for expressing the strongest and purest human experiences, became a mirror not only of lovely nature but also of the human heart. Looking at the studies and pictures of this great artist, one is able not only to see with one's eye the wonderful English countryside (it is still exactly the same as Constable depicted it), but also to feel the strong pulse of real, flowing, changing, endlessly varied and rich life.

For Constable nature was invariably the setting for man's work and creative activity ; he was the first to free it from the preconceived schemes of the classical landscape of the preceding centuries, and he affirmed the high artistic value of ordinary nature, in no way remarkable and making no claim whatsoever to ideal beauty. He found a higher poetry in the dirty colliers on the yellow



Brighton beach, in the shady banks of the River Stour, in the bare hillocks of Hampstead Heath, from which he knew how to extract a multiplicity of various conditions of light and air, and palpable plasticity of earth. Constable's outdoor painting, full of living truth and brilliant in its bold, free skill, has been a model for a host of painters in different countries, from the Barbizon School to the Impressionists.

During his lifetime England failed to appreciate Constable, her greatest artist, and rewarded him only with misunderstanding and ridicule. The bourgeois public was frightened by his democratic approach and the unruly freedom of his thought ; it found the fantastic world of Turner more comfortable and pleasant. Turner was the idol of the respectable public and critics, who sought in art not a reflection of living truth, but the free flight of romantic imagination, creating its own imaginary world in opposition to the 'uninteresting' world of real life and real nature. Turner's fame rests on a completely different basis from that of the great realist masters of the past. It is not based on extracting the highest artistic and poetic values from life, but on mistrust of the natural life and a desire to replace it by something 'higher', by some mystic 'higher truth' (according to the definition of Ruskin, who was mainly responsible for Turner's fame in England).

It is difficult to agree with Turner, Ruskin and the authors of the exhibition catalogue on what should be understood by the term 'higher truth' in art.

The authors of the catalogue observe that many European and American artists of the 20th century follow in Turner's footsteps. I do not really know if it is possible to trace modern abstract art, particularly American tachism, back to the traditions of Turner. But one thing is certain ; already more than 100 years ago he laid down the principles of an art independent of life, an art that transformed real life into a shimmering amorphous mirage, destroying all signs of place and time, distance and form, and peopling the world with frightening mystic spectres, like his 'Evening and Morning of the Universal Deluge' or 'A Skeleton Leaning from a Galloping Horse'. Turner is represented at the Moscow exhibition by very dull and boring examples, and it is difficult to form any judgment of his strange and spectral art from them.

The flowering of English art virtually ended with the death of Constable in 1837. The Victorian era, so painfully dreary for English art, stifled the eager striving of artists and turned painting into a trivial and empty naturalistic craft called upon to throw a rosy gloss over the unattractive bourgeois reality. It gave birth to William Frith's virtuous tradespeople and virtuous detectives (in the picture 'The Railway Station' shown at the exhibition), to Landseer's child and dog allegories, to Watts's vulgar symbolism, and to the false mystic exaltation of the pre-Raphaelites. Sickly-sweet edification killed everything that was alive ; colour turned into a cacophony of mordant variegated paints reminiscent of oilcloth. In contrast to the literature of the times of Dickens and Thackeray, Victorian art proved impotent.

On this cloudy horizon brightly gleamed the star of the American, Whistler, who throughout his life in England was surrounded with quarrels and mockery, and who had really nothing in common with his English contemporaries, as is apparent from the exhibition. It now seems quite natural that Ruskin, who could praise the sugary sentimental Millais or Holman Hunt to the skies, abused Whistler in print. Strong and simple, full of living truth, Whistler's genuinely realistic art is represented in its full force—both in the wonderful, reflective, delicate portraits of Thomas Carlyle and Miss Cicely Alexander and in the fine evening landscape 'Nocturne—Cremorne Lights'.

In their desire to cancel out in one way or another the perfectly obvious, profound realism of Whistler, the authors of the catalogue have resorted to a complete untruth : they write of this inspired and poetic artist, so in love with life, as though he 'considered the subject inessential and emphasised the funda-

mental qualities of painting, that is colour and tonal harmonies and decorative design'.\* But Whistler cannot be made out to be a precursor of the modern tachists; he really knew how to use 'colour and tonal harmonies' to reveal the significance and importance of the 'subject'!

Although Whistler is naturally more closely linked with the American realist tradition of the 19th century, he nonetheless carefully studied Constable, and in his turn helped to form the group of artists of the new English Art Club, who at the turn of the century brought serious and profound realistic principles back into English painting. Those talented and interesting artists—Augustus John, William Orpen, Walter Sickert, Frank Brangwyn—revived the art of portraiture, which had long been extinguished in England except for Whistler (the magnificent works of 82-year-old Augustus John stand out specially at the exhibition, particularly the portrait of Bernard Shaw). To them also belong many successful treasures in the genre of everyday life, for example Sickert's 'Boredom'. These artists have shown clearly that by relying on the experience of Gainsborough, Constable and Whistler it is possible to work on a new realist art corresponding to the ideas and strivings of their own time.

Unfortunately their experience has not been carried forward. It is not accidental that the description of these artists in the catalogue (compiled by admirers and devotees of abstract art) includes censorious remarks and humiliating anecdotes about them.

The most extreme trends of formalist art—different varieties of expressionism, surrealism and abstractionism—were widespread in British art after World War I. It is all presented with excessive lavishness; and here a sense of objectivity has clearly deserted the organisers, since, with the single exception of Middleditch's 'Pigeons in Trafalgar Square', they have forgotten to include works by contemporary painters of the realist trend, of whom there are many in Britain.

It would seem that their earnest desire to convince themselves and others that realism is 'old-fashioned', that in the 20th century one should only be concerned with the same monotonous experiments of combining abstract dots and lines, has proved stronger than the demands of objective truth. Yet because of such narrow prejudices the exhibition is inferior and is conducive to ideas—obviously incorrect—of a complete creative and ideological degeneration of modern English painting.

The authors of the catalogue present the abstract and surrealist pictures with obscure arguments, familiar since the days of Malevich and Kandinsky, and which have not altered in the slightest since then. How does this tie up with promises of unprecedented artistic progress along the path of abstract art? It came to a stop long since, and has become outdated, and is changing imperceptibly, before the eyes of its supporters, into its own kind of decrepit and fruitless pedantry, utterly incapable of expressing the profundities that its apologists would like it to.

The anonymous authors of the commentary in the catalogue, who have no scruples about putting Constable's realism on the same plane as the banal and empty naturalism of the Victorian painters, find unusually delicate and respectful expressions to describe the revolting surrealist pictures of Bacon or Sutherland or the characterless, monotonous oils of the abstractionists. Mary Chamot, of the Tate Gallery (the main centre in Britain for the promotion of abstract and surrealist art), writes openly and simply in her introduction to the catalogue: 'Some artists attempt to create an ideal order from the chaos surrounding them; they find it easier to convey their experience unconfined by detailed description.'† People who are surrounded by chaos are to be pitied, but they have

---

\* Retranslated from Russian.

† Retranslated from Russian

chosen a rather strange way of getting themselves out of this chaos by transferring it all on to their canvas.

All these circumstances only deepen the impression of the decline of modern British art. With a slightly different choice of exhibits this impression would undoubtedly have been less sharp, and the opinion of the critic less severe.

Although the 'final conclusion' of the exhibition, as one may put it, is badly drawn, its value is not thereby altered. It is easy to separate the good from the bad, the eternal from the transient, genuine artistic values from the sham.

We must express our deep gratitude to the British Council and the exhibition committee (which included leading British scholars, art historians and museum experts) for this exhibition, which gives us an opportunity to appreciate the real and great art treasures of the British people.

*Sovetskaya kultura*, May 28, 1960.

Translated by J. M. W.

## 'KHOVANSCHINA' AS A FILM

D. T. Richnell

LAST year Oxford helped English opera-goers to re-discover Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina*. A copy of the Soviet film version has now reached London, performed by artists of the Bolshoi Theatre and, what is perhaps more important, edited and orchestrated by Dmitri Shostakovich. No public performance has so far been arranged, but some notes on a private showing may help to stimulate sufficient interest to ensure this important event being shared by others who care about Russian opera and fine operatic performance.

The outstanding quality of the performance can be taken for granted where such singer-actors as Mark Reizen (Dosifei) and Krivchenya (Ivan Khovansky) are concerned. If there is any surprise, it is that the younger generation of Bolshoi singers, less known in Britain, acquit themselves with such uniform excellence. Mention must be made of V. Petrov (Golitsyn), A. Grigoriev (Andrei Khovansky), E. Kibkalo (Shaklovity) and K. Leonova (Marfa)—this last a difficult and exacting role, sung and acted with deep conviction. But the uniform excellence is underlined by the fact that the forceful performance of even the minor part of Susanna by L. Gritsenko makes such a deep impression.

It must be admitted that the doubt as to whether any film version of an opera can be wholly successful is left unresolved. The very freedom in production, especially on a wide screen, deprives of their full effectiveness many of the dramatic strokes designed specifically for the limitations of the operatic stage. But this is not a weakness peculiar to the present film, and one must be grateful for the positive advantages of a medium that can catch and preserve for ever an authoritative interpretation of a particular epoch.

The main interest of the film is naturally the editorial work of Shostakovich. *Khovanshchina* was left by Musorgsky incomplete and almost entirely un-orchestrated. Of the present orchestration it is difficult to speak with assurance

---

\* *Khovanshchina*. Edited and scored by Dmitri Shostakovich. Scenario by A. Abramova and D. Shostakovich, with V. Stroeva. Producer: V. Stroeva. Cameraman: V. Dombovsky. Sets and art direction: A. Borisov. Mosfilm, 1959.

after a single hearing in conditions somewhat short of ideal. It is better to leave aside this aspect of the matter for the present with the observation that there are obviously many felicities in the scoring which seem to clarify Musorgsky's intentions. But how far some of these may be due to a 20th-century projection of the composer's image only a more detailed study can reveal.

That there has been an injection of 20th-century ideas in the editorial work is much more probable, but in matters of interpretation it is impossible to separate the hand of Shostakovich from that of the producer, Vera Stroevea. Before considering the more controversial matters it can be said that the inclusion of a number of scenes omitted from the Rimsky-Korsakov version is pure gain. The most notable of these are the scene between the scrivener and the people of Moscow in Act I; between Golitsyn and the German pastor in Act II; and the splendid folk-song given to Kuzka in the Streltsy scene of Act III. On the debit side are the omission of the 'Haiduchok' song and the drastic abbreviation of the Persian dances in Act IV Sc. i. No doubt the producer could argue that the prolongation of these passages would have thrown the whole sequence of this scene out of balance and lessened the dramatic effect of Khovansky's end. But to those familiar with the score there is an inevitable sense of loss, which is increased by the fact that Plisetskaya is the soloist in the Persian dances.

Many of the other editorial changes affect the interpretation of Musorgsky's dramatic intentions. The most startling is the assignment of Shaklovity's monologue in Act III to a nameless 'leader of the people'. It is true that it has always been difficult to justify the use of this scheming feudal grandee as the mouthpiece of the great prayer for the deliverance of Russia from feudal darkness. Anyone with even a passable knowledge of Russian history is bound to feel a sense of irony, if not of outrage. But as to whether or not there is any justification in scholarly research on Musorgsky's intentions for assigning the monologue to a leader of the people is another matter, on which there is room for considerable doubt. What can be said is that it fits extremely neatly into the general pattern of the interpretation.

The traditional interpretation of the significance of *Khovanshchina* is that its central theme is the conflict between the dark forces of old feudal Russia (the Khovanskys and the Streltsy the less savoury element, and the Old Believers the misguided tragic sufferers) and the enlightened, modernising reformism of Peter the Great and his westernised entourage. There is much documentary support for the view that this was Musorgsky's intention. On this reading the Russian people play not so much a passive as an undirected role. On the other hand, the present version seems to shift the centre of the conflict and makes the main antithesis between the warring minorities (the Khovanskys' party and the Tsar's party) and the Russian people.

This result is mainly achieved by depicting the Streltsy in a better light than the text appears to warrant, and by minimising the references to Peter the Great and his German-officered regiments. The latter can be done without violation of Musorgsky's musical text, since the main references (as far as dramatic effect is concerned) are, in Rimsky-Korsakov's version, at the ends of Act II, Act IV Sc. ii, and Act V—that is, in two out of three cases, at points where Musorgsky's intentions are by no means clear. Act II was never finished by him. He planned a concerted finale, but left it at the point where Shaklovity announces Peter's action to suppress the revolt of the Khovanskys. Rimsky-Korsakov added an orchestral postlude that by its thematic material seems to link Peter's triumph with the triumph of the people. (The theme is that of the folk-tune in the prelude, which Musorgsky had already used in association with the name of Peter.) Shostakovich, however, dispenses with this postlude and leaves the act on a note of unresolved dramatic conflict.

The end of Act IV Sc. ii is, musically speaking, the same in the two versions.

This is the scene in which the defeated Streltsy are made to march to their own execution, carrying blocks and axes. At the last moment a herald announces a reprieve by Tsar Peter. This is associated with the joyous strains of the Poteschny march, suggestive of rejoicing at a great act of clemency on the part of an enlightened leader. The film, however, by a change of dramatic emphasis and musical dynamics, brings the scene to a close on a note of perplexed suffering in the minds of the reprieved, which suggests that the infliction of such mental torture is the act of a far from enlightened despot.

The end of Act V, the close of the opera, is fair game for any editor of a performing version. Musorgsky did not complete it, and he probably was not sure how he would complete it. Rimsky-Korsakov claimed some verbal justification for his use of the theme of the Poteschny march, the march of Tsar Peter's regiment, to bring the opera to a close on a note of triumph following the ghastly tragedy of the Old Believers' self-destruction by fire. We are left with a sense that the old order has given place to new and better things. Shostakovich, however, concludes the opera, reverts to the folk tune from the prelude, and the film shows a group of Russian people (including the nameless 'leader of the people') gazing out over a dark landscape. The suggestion is that their struggles and conflicts are still unresolved and the hope of a new age is still far distant.

As an ending this is in itself unexceptionable, as is the ending of Act II. And these two passages make us realise to what an extent the emphasis on the positive role of Peter was the work of Rimsky-Korsakov. We are forced to ask whether Musorgsky himself had any such intention, or whether his friend and editor inserted these passages to overcome the censorship difficulties he encountered in getting the work staged at all. The main musical argument for believing that Rimsky-Korsakov was interpreting Musorgsky's general intentions seems to depend on the Poteschny march, which symbolises Peter the Great and the westernising forces. This is thematically remarkably similar to the folk tune in the prelude. That this folk tune is, as it were, a symbol of Russia and the Russian people seems accepted by Shostakovich, since he uses it for his ending of this opera with this apparent significance. If it is so, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the joyous march based on a westernised variant of the theme was supposed to imply the emergence of Russia from the dark ages under Peter's leadership.

This alternative ending of Shostakovich seems to be part of an editorial reorientation of the opera that in other respects strains Musorgsky's expressed intention beyond permissible limits. In this connection the assignment of Shaklovity's monologue to the 'leader of the people' is crucial. The sympathetic portrayal of the Streltsy and the muting of the liturgical music of the Old Believers are matters of production perhaps, but this other is a matter of musical scholarship. Unless convincing evidence is available that Musorgsky himself intended, at least at some stage in the writing of the opera, to assign the key monologue in Act III to a 'leader of the people', Shostakovich must be held guilty of projecting his own concepts of leadership, based on 20th-century communist society, into the mind of the 19th-century composer. If the evidence is there, then indeed his whole interpretation would seem to make the best of sense, with important consequences for our attitude to Musorgsky.\*

There is at least one other textual crux that may be vital. In the final scene (Rimsky-Korsakov version) Marfa and Andrei Khovansky are assigned brief vocal interventions rising above the hymn of the Old Believers on the burning pyre. Marfa, the staunch Old Believer, the representative of what is best and most tragic in the dying feudal order, has all through the opera been in love

---

\* For comments on this point by Soviet critics see notes by N. Tumanina and M. Sabinina on pp. 32—34.



with Andrei Khovansky, in whose name rebellion against Tsar Peter has been organized. He is a worthless individual and has been pursuing Emma, the German Lutheran girl. (It must be remembered that it was the German and Dutch traders and military advisers who were the important instruments in the modernising, westernising process that Peter was to bring to fruition). Marfa believes that self-sacrificing devotion to Andrei has been rewarded by their reunion in death. Her voice soars above the chorus with a rapturous phrase of love ; but Andrei in his dying moment sings 'Oh, Emma, Emma!' Presumably this was not a fancy of Rimsky-Korsakov, but was based on Musorgsky's libretto. If this is so, the significance is surely that the self-sacrifice of the Old Believers has been tragically useless, and that the westernising, modernising influences are irresistible and unchanged.

In the Bolshoi Theatre version of the opera on gramophone records this final cry of Andrei's was changed to 'Oh, Marfa, Marfa!' Such a facile, 'love-triumphant-in-death' ending seems far less satisfactory, and far less characteristic of Musorgsky. It is, therefore, a matter of great interest to know what view Shostakovich takes. Alas, in the film Marfa's voice can be heard above the chorus, but Andrei's, if there at all, is so indistinct that no words are audible. If this is deliberate editorial omission, it suggests that Shostakovich could not fit the final reference to Emma into the pattern of his interpretation. If it is a failure of production, it is surely a most unfortunate one.

These notes are of the most tentative character, based as they are on a single hearing of a monumental work, without reference to the vital sources on which editorial judgment must be based. They can attempt no authoritative answer to problems raised. It is hoped, however, that they will serve two useful purposes—firstly, to draw attention once more to these problems in the hope that those best qualified may help us in this country to a fuller understanding of *Khovanshchina*; secondly, to stimulate a sufficiently wide interest in the film version to ensure a public showing.

Whatever points of doubt and criticism have been raised, let it be clear that this film is one of the most interesting, both musically and musicologically, that has ever been made.

*N. Tumanina, writing on the film in "Sovetskaya muzyka," No. 1, 1960, comments (in part):*

The film *Khovanshchina* is a great artistic success for its creators. . . . They have produced a work that harmonises cinema with musical drama. I should like to write at once of the fruitful co-operation between the film workers and D. Shostakovich. His participation in the production, not only as author of a new scoring of the opera but also as co-author of the scenario, certainly helped to ensure that the film fully preserves the specific quality of the musical drama and in general faithfully conveys the character and atmosphere of Musorgsky's *Khovanshchina*.

Shostakovich succeeded in preserving most of the music of *Khovanshchina* in the film (a major cut was made only in Act III). In his new scoring he has achieved a different and, in comparison with Rimsky-Korsakov's version, a strong and at the same time expressive tone colour which reveals Musorgsky's idea with great depth and sensitivity. . . .

One can agree with the musical editing

of the film on the whole except for one instance. The authors—apparently in order to save time—have completely cut out the opening scenes of Act III, with Marfa's wonderful song and the music that follows of her passionate confession to Dosifei. The depth of her character and her strong and wholehearted nature are fully disclosed in these scenes. This is indeed a regrettable cut. As for the end of the film, where Shostakovich first uses the prelude to Act V ('the rustle of the forest in the moonlight, like the sound of waves', as Musorgsky puts it) and then repeats 'Dawn on the Moscow River', this interesting innovation will provoke no argument. The finale of this goes well with the shots of clearing weather. It is a pity, however, that the music is drowned by the words of the commentator, which are not very successful, being full of banal phrases about the fate of the Russian people. At the beginning of the film 'Dawn' is also accompanied, by the way, by the commentator's voice, so in both instances this wonderful music cannot be fully appreciated.

The makers of the film have given a faithful interpretation of the opera in terms of

screen drama. Throughout almost the entire film one is not conscious of the theatrical limitations of the opera. The well-directed sequences of the first three acts do not have any annoying 'operatic' quality. Only during the first scene of the fourth act (at Khovansky's estate) does a disagreeable note appear. The theatrical splendour of the 'dances of the Persian maidens' conflicts with the general realistic plan of the film. And, though Maya Plisetskaya gives a wonderful performance in this scene, the very character of the dances, the dancers' make-up and the conventionality of their movements inject a discordant element of opera-ballet convention. It would have been better, perhaps, to sacrifice the music of the 'dances' and leave out the whole sequence, which even in the opera itself seems out of keeping with the rest of the work.

The injection of realism into the scene of the procession to the place of execution raises some argument. It seems that the director did not appreciate the power of Musorgsky's music, which here reaches a pinnacle of understanding of life, and introduced into the web of sound the screaming and wailing of the wives of the Streltsy, destroying the purely musical impression. The static quality of the scenes in the monastery are also not entirely satisfactory. The change of shots—the theatrically burning monastery, the people walking along the road, troops making their way through the forest—appears obtrusive, and once again interferes with appreciation of the music—the unforgettable, harrowing tragic chorus of the dissenters.

In accordance with Musorgsky's concept the script writers and directors have tried in every way to accentuate the character of *Khovanshchina* as a national drama. For this reason one cannot object to the prominence given in the film to the 'strange people'. Musorgsky has them only in Act I, but in the film their procession becomes an important 'passing theme' of the drama. Shots showing their procession on a hill begin and end the film. The idea of giving Shaklovity's aria to the 'leader of the people', who sings it on behalf of the people, was successfully executed. More than once in our musical literature attention has been drawn to the contradictions in Musorgsky's interpretation of Shaklovity, whom he called, in his letter to Stasov, an 'arch-soundrel', but to whom he nevertheless gave a wonderful aria full of deep, tragic thoughts on the fate of the people. It is more likely that Musorgsky spoke his own words through the mouth of Shaklovity as 'author's speech'; and this aria-song (which can be traced back to Susanin's aria 'Come, my dawn') comes naturally from the simple peasant. One thing may raise some doubt—the exclusion from the aria of the commencing recitative 'The stronghold of the Streltsy sleeps', which is sung by Shaklovity in a threatening, conspiratorial tone as he contemplates the picture of Moscow at night.

*M. Sabinina comments in an article in 'Iskusstvo kino,' No. 4, 1960 :*

'My role was a very modest one', Shostakovich told us about his work on the film. 'The late P. A. Lamm accomplished the truly heroic work of assembling all Musorgsky's manuscripts and first drafts and publishing them. I used this edition [piano score] of Lamm's and scored the opera anew, rejecting Musorgsky's scoring. For the latter, despite his extraordinary gift of melody and innovative sense of harmony, made poor use of the resources and tone colour of the symphony orchestra. Where brilliant, full sounds were needed there are only poor, thin ones in his scoring. I kept strictly, however, to his part writing and harmony. *Khovanshchina*, in my opinion, is the best and greatest of Russian operas. I like it best of all, and place only *Boris Godunov* near it—in second place! I am very glad that this work will become popular through the medium of the cinema, and I believe that this is extremely useful for our cultural life. . . . Cuts? Of course, every one of them is annoying, and in general I was against them; but then it was necessary to give way to the iron logic of "the special character of cinema".'

I certainly agree with D. Shostakovich that the cuts produce a disagreeable impression. When they concern details, like the repetition of couplets, it is of little importance; but when they affect central musical images and whole scenes it is bad. The producer and co-author of the scenario, Vera Stroeva, has 'shot' a lot of the opera. She was, of course, quite right to insert the episodes concerning the people, which are missing in Rimsky-Korsakov's edition—the scenes of the 'strange people'. These are the scenes that contain the fundamental positive idea of the whole work, the idea of the motherland, the moral assessment of events. The scene with Marfa's song should not, however, have been sacrificed. By doing so the majestic and deeply dramatic figure of Marfa loses its versatility, for it is in this song that Marfa reveals, in all its simplicity and integrity, the character of the *Russian* woman. [We should mention that in the version which will be shown abroad this episode is included; it has been filmed and printed. Why doesn't the viewer in our country have the same advantage?]. From the musical point of view the film is completely and carefully faithful to the sequence of Musorgsky's thought, magnificently reinterpreted by Shostakovich. The omission we have mentioned is thereby all the more noticeable.

The film takes two other 'liberties' with regard to the original. Firstly, Shaklovity's aria [which begins 'Ah, thou in thy unhappy fate, native Russia!'] is transferred to the nameless 'leader of the people'. Secondly, a finale is added after the terrible scene of the self-immolation of the dissenters. This ending consists of a repetition of the choral song of the people and the orchestral overture to the opera—'Dawn on the Moscow

River'. Neither of these 'liberties' can, however, be objected to; in both cases the authors of the scenario and the producer have been guided by perfectly obvious and convincing arguments. The ending—in the film the dawn of a new day rises and pierces the dark clouds, and people in peasant dress traverse the vast distances of their native land in search of truth and a better lot—clarifies and accentuates the idea behind the opera. Essentially the same aim is pursued

by the substitution of the 'leader of the people' for Shaklovity where the aria expresses profound and noble grief at the fate of the motherland. Shaklovity the perfidious, unscrupulous intriguer and Shaklovity deeply suffering for Russia, the wise patriot—that is the contradiction that critics, opera producers and performers have argued about for decades. The producer was quite right to simplify this character and remove the enigma.

## THE VODI

**The Vodi.** John Braine. (Eyre and Spottiswoode. 283 pp. 16/-.)

**I**n his latest novel, John Braine concentrates in the main on psychological themes which are not distinguished by any particular depth or originality. Compared with his previous novel, the social content here is considerably poorer, as it is moreover in the latest works of Kingsley Amis and John Osborne.

Somewhere in the background of the novel flash past insignificant episodes reflecting particular aspects of life in Britain today: the difficulties of the post-war period, the uncertain situation of small proprietors, the search for work by poor young people. These details, however, are scanty and dull.

John Braine's second novel is indicative of the limitedness of a considerable part of the literature of the 'angry young men'. Writers of this trend quickly exhaust the pathos of their 'anger' simply because the majority of them have no desire to go beyond the framework of particular facts and try to reveal the root cause of that spiritual crisis through which young people in bourgeois Britain are living.

It cannot be denied that John Braine has literary ability. The style of the novel is remarkable for its liveliness, but the figures of the characters are shallower than in his first work. There is another thing to be said about *The Vodi*: with this writer, as with Amis and Osborne, the chief character relies solely on his own spiritual resources. There are even notes of reconciliation with contemporary reality in the novel.

It would be premature to draw the conclusion that the creative potentialities of such

an undoubtedly talented writer as John Braine are now exhausted. The further development of his talent cannot, however, possibly lie along the path he has chosen in *The Vodi*. Only a return to the most acute problems of social life and the desire to gain an understanding of its real contradictions will secure for him the popularity which he deservedly won with his first novel.

A. ANIKST.

—*Inostrannaya literatura*, 1960, No. 5.  
Abridged.

## SOVIET SHORT STORIES

**Such a Simple Thing and Other Soviet Stories.** (FLPH. 456 pp. 7/6.)

**Outside Paradise and Other Stories.** Andrejs Upits. (FLPH. 368 pp. 6/-.)

**Across the Lines.** Victor Kin. (FLPH. 256 pp.)

**It Happened in Penkovo.** Sergei Antonov. (FLPH. 212 pp. 4/6.)

All available from Central Books.

**T**HE first of these is a collection of 17 stories ranging from Gorky and Alexei Tolstoy to the present day. It contains some excellent things, but it also makes one reflect on some of the limitations of socialist realism.

Most of the best work in the anthology comes from the 1920s: Gorky's 'First Love', Lavrenyov's 'Such a Simple Thing', Malyshev's 'A Train to the South'. These stories have warmth, vigour and unexpectedness, a bold broad lyricism which is very fetching and which has disappeared in the thin, conventional, didactic little sketches of

the 1950s. Andronikov's 'The Portrait' is an autobiographical essay, not a story at all; Merkulov's 'In Flight' is a piece of slightly disguised documentary. Curiously enough, the most interesting story by a younger writer, Yuri Kazakov's 'The Hound', a moving account of the life of a blind dog, is referred to rather patronisingly by the editor.

On the whole, although one is glad to see the work by Paustovsky and Nagibin which appears here, a more impressive selection both of them and of other writers of the period could have been made.

Some of the younger Russian writers could learn from the Latvian Andrejs Upits that an *imaginative re-creation* is necessary if the raw material of experience is to be presented in the form of art. 'Outside Paradise', the title-story in Upits's present collection, enters vividly into the minds of Adam and Eve after they have been expelled from paradise, and by this means tries to establish a general point: that struggle, difficulty and hope are preferable to a protected status in society.

Victor Kin's *Across the Lines* (1928) is an enthusiastically written, eminently readable adventure story of the early years of Soviet power in eastern Siberia. It stands in strong contrast to the homely tale of *It Happened in Penkovo*. Sergei Antonov's account of the somewhat trite young-inexperienced-female-zootechnician-visits-backward-village situation has, in spite of a shamelessly contrived ending, some nice touches of humour and mild satire.

EDWIN MORGAN.

## PISEMSKY AND KUPRIN

**The Simpleton.** Alexei Pisemsky. (FLPH. 224 pp. 4/6.)

**The Garnet Bracelet.** Alexander Kuprin. (FLPH. 382 pp. 7/6.)

Both available from Central Books.

THE useless monstrosities which in mid-19th-century Russia were engendered and nurtured in idleness by the system of state and private slavery are well typified in Pisemsky's depressing novel *The Simpleton*.

The story of the disastrous marriage of Pavel (50 serfs unmortgaged) to Julie (proud daughter of prouder but serfless parents) is told with saturnine humour and a quiet detachment that reaches almost to tragedy—not the tragedy of the individual, but of a whole doomed society powerless to help itself.

Pavel is unacceptable in polite circles because, although a brilliant scholar, 'he did not know how to behave with propriety'. Lacking all the social graces, he is despised by his wife, who has 'romantic' notions. She attempts adultery and he attempts revenge, but all action, in keeping with the vapidity of their characters, becomes untidily

and ineffectually diffuse, and the whole thing peters out in formless futility.

There is not a word wasted or out of place in Pisemsky's narrative.

Alexander Kuprin, less consciously an artist, had a good ear for dialogue, which is happily captured by his translator in *The Garnet Bracelet*.

This is a volume of eight short stories representative of Kuprin's work from 1896 to 1911. The range is wide, from the gentle sentiment of the title-story itself to the savagery of 'The Gambrinus'.

'Gambrinus' is the name of a rumbustious seaport tavern which might indeed serve as Kuprin's emblem or device, since the whole of suffering but irrepressible humanity seems to reel unsteadily through its portals, as it does through his stories.

He is at his best when portraying the steely resilience of the under-dog, whose powers of survival are for the author something of a symbol of hope in humanity.

First acquaintance with Kuprin's work may be marred for some by the very indifferent story called 'Moloch' with which this collection opens. It is an early piece of crude polemic which may reasonably die and never rise to do the author wrong in the larger context of his later achievement.

W. S. BAILEY.

## MOSCOW THEATRES TODAY

**Moscow Theatres.** V. Kommissarzhevsky. (FLPH. 219 pp. 12/6. Available from Central Books.)

"CERTAIN negative tendencies took shape in the post-war development of Soviet art. They were an outgrowth of the Stalin personality cult—a deeply fallacious practice that ran counter to the spirit of socialism and the Lenin Party standards and did much harm to our theatre as well. A pompous ostentation developed in our drama which greatly exaggerated the role of the head of state and left the rank-and-file citizen, the man who made history, totally in the shade. . . . Some of our theatres lapsed into a creative doldrums. The claim that they were following in Stanislavsky's footsteps was, of course, completely groundless."

The foregoing criticisms and certain others are contained in *Moscow Theatres*, a new work by V. Kommissarzhevsky, well-known Soviet critic and producer. British directors, actors and journalists who maintain that there is no criticism worth the name in the Soviet Union and that the theatre has become a museum, please note!

Kommissarzhevsky's book is invaluable not only for British actors and directors, but for the ordinary visiting tourist faced with a list of theatres of which he knows nothing except perhaps one or two famous actors and productions at the Moscow Art.

While it does not set out to be a guide-

book, it does give an up-to-date history of all the most prominent theatres in Moscow, including some whose history and origins are but vaguely known to English theatregoers—the Maly, for instance.

It is not generally realised that the Maly, or the Ostrovsky house as it is often called, is really the senior theatre in Moscow—the equivalent of the house of Molière in Paris. Kommissarzhevsky's description of its early beginnings as a 'counter-Imperial theatre' in the days of the Decembrists, when *Hamlet* became a contemporary revolutionary play to the tense Moscow audiences of 1825, makes one realise what a great part the Russian theatre played in the national progressive movement at that time. Gogol's *Government Inspector* made its appearance at the Maly soon afterwards, and was an open attack on Tsarist corruption and officialdom.

*Moscow Theatres* is lavishly illustrated with fascinating photographs of all the leading Moscow actors, directors and productions past and present, and is an excellent work of reference in this respect. It also includes an account of the work of such companies as the Moscow Central Children's Theatre, which I visited 18 months ago with members of the Stratford-on-Avon Memorial Theatre company.

What a joy it was, I recall, to sit among

the bright-faced, well-behaved Moscow schoolchildren that morning as we watched a splendid performance of *Red Riding Hood*. In the interval we went backstage to meet the actors and were addressed in English by Red Riding Hood herself, who turned out to be a young married woman of 19. A splendid thing, we all thought, if only we had in London a permanent theatre to house 2,000 children!

Interesting also are the author's accounts of the Stanislavsky Musical Theatre, the newly founded Stanislavsky Drama Theatre (a company of youngsters who perhaps did not get much of a chance to expand in the parent group!), and finally a short history of the Actors' House and the Central House of Art Workers, two organisations of which there are no equivalents in England. They really combine the work of all the actors' and variety artists' clubs plus the British Drama League, the Society for Theatre Research and the Arts Council put together.

MARK DIGNAM.

## FILM HISTORY

**Iskusstvo Millionov** (Art for the Millions; Soviet Cinema 1917-57). Edited by D. S. Pisarevsky. (Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1958. 624 pp., illustrated. Available from Collet's. 47/6.)

**Na Urokakh Rezhissury S. Eisensteina** (At Eisenstein's Lessons in Direction). Vladimir Nizhni. (Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1958. 202 pp., with diagrams.)

**Mosfilm, First Number: Work on the Film.** Edited by Ivan Pyriev and other filmmakers at the Mosfilm Studio. (Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1959. 389 pp., illustrated.)

**Krupnim Planom** (In Close-up). Esfir Shub. (Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1959. 254 pp., illustrated. Available from Collet's. 17/6.)

**Charles Spencer Chaplin.** Georgi Avenarius. (Academy of Sciences of USSR, 1959. 265 pp., illustrated.)

**Ocherki Istorii Sovetskogo Kino** (Essays on the History of the Soviet Cinema), Vol. II—1935-45. Edited by Yu. S. Kalashnikov and others. (Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1959.)

**Voprosy Kino Iskusstva** (Questions of Film Art). Vol. III. An annual collection on history and theory, edited by S. Froelich (Academy of Sciences of USSR, 1959. 415 pp., illustrated.)

**Iz Istorii Kino** (From Film History; materials and documents). Vols. I and II. Edited by S. Ginzburg (Academy of Sciences of USSR, 1958, 1959. 199 and 189 pp. respectively.)

THE increasingly objective and scientific approach to matters of Soviet film history is strikingly reflected in the large number of new books on this subject. During 1958 and 1959 Soviet work in this field has been both more extensive and concrete than in any other country's publications.

The new period appears to have opened with three substantial volumes devoted to writings by the three late geniuses of Soviet

---

## The cheapest way to get SOVIET BOOKS is through the RUSSIA TODAY BOOK CLUB

Membership is free to SCR  
members on application

Send your SCR card when applying

A NEW BOOK EACH  
MONTH FOR ONLY **3/-**

As each book is dispatched from Moscow by registered  
post there is a delay of several weeks in delivery.

### CURRENT CHOICES AVAILABLE

May Choice : **MOTHER** (Gorki)

June Choice : **SUCH A SIMPLE THING**  
(Short Stories)

July Choice : **HEART OF A FRIEND**  
(Kazakevich)

August Choice : **SCARLET FLOWER**  
(V. Garshin)



Send order and cash to RTBC  
36 SPENCER ST., LONDON, E.C.1.

---



cinema—Pudovkin (published in 1955), Eisenstein (1956), and Dovzhenko (1957).

The first two volumes concentrated on essays and theory, while Dovzhenko was represented chiefly by his scripts, realised and unrealised, yet each collection formed a tangible basis for studying the contributions of each master, in connection, of course, with their finished films, which in turn were more often and systematically shown and analysed at this time than ever before.

The Mosfilm volume, the first in a projected series, is a remarkable collection of material. No other film studio in the world has ever celebrated its own accomplishment in such a permanently valuable form. It opens with tributes to and documents by Dovzhenko, who was planning 'Poem about a Sea' for Mosfilm when he died in 1956. Then comes a group of articles headed 'From Creative Practice', by the best directors, writers, cameramen, designers, composers and actors now working at Mosfilm, discussing their experiences in unusually frank and concrete terms. The next section is entitled 'Experiences of Past Years', and the Eisenstein and Pudovkin documents that dominate this section would alone give the volume international importance.

There are three foreign comments, by Marcel Martin, Georges Sadoul and Cecil Holmes, ending with a group of technical articles on new methods and inventions.

One of the smallest and most modest film books in the last two years may be one of the most lasting. Just before his death, Vladimir Nizhni, one of Eisenstein's students in the '30s, prepared a work in four chapters based on the stenograms of several Eisenstein lectures at the Film Institute.

The chapters are the four basic stages in Eisenstein's carefully planned course for directors. In the absence of the book on film direction that the master could not complete, Nizhni's work fills a serious gap in our knowledge of Eisenstein's many-sided contribution: as teacher, eager, disciplined, peppery, alert, inspiring, demanding, and devoted to this great work of teaching.\*

Esther Shub was the Soviet film-maker who helped Eisenstein take the step from theatre to film work. She earned a place in film history in her own right for her inventive and imaginative study of editing, and especially for her work with archive films. She finished her volume of memoirs just before her death last year. It covers a rich period of Russian life as well as Soviet films, with new light on both Mayakovsky and Eisenstein.

The first volume of *Essays on the History of Soviet Cinema*, prepared by the cinema members of the Academy of Sciences' art history section, appeared in 1956, and the second has now been issued.

\* We understand that arrangements have been made for the publication of this book by an English publisher.

The differences between the two are themselves an indication of the swift changes that have taken place in the work of film historians. For one thing, this volume is far more detailed; though it covers a ten-year period it is almost twice the size of the first, which covered all the films made from 1917 to 1934. The form remains uniform with the first volume, a collection of essays by various writers on departmentalised genres of film-making—comedies, histories, literary adaptations, etc.—and this is a form that can never be wholly satisfactory as a substitute for a continuing single historical line. But all this is useful for the future historian, and the airing of critical attitudes to the recent past is a help to reader and student.

A third volume, coming closer to the present, is in preparation.

Film historians in the Academy of Sciences issue two collections annually, both of great value. The earlier to begin was *Questions of Film Art*; No. 3 appeared in 1959. This concentrates on theory and analysis by both film-makers and historian-critics. These essays are longer than would fit into the increasingly ambitious monthly magazine *Iskusstvo Kino* (*Art of Cinema*), edited by L. Pogozheva, a magazine that must be added to the new weight given to film study there.

The other annual publication of the Academy, *From Film History*, is devoted mainly to documents needed for historical work. The first number (in 1958) printed memoirs, chronologies and similar essential work-materials, ending with a careful bibliography of Dovzhenko. The second (1959) gives us our first good look at the contents and extent of the Vertov archive, an archive that will be used much in the future as interest in this heretofore rather neglected genius accumulates.

One vivid symptom of the attention given to these matters (which we might consider of 'specialist' interest only) is the information in the back of each volume (as in all Soviet publications) on the quantities printed: 2,500 of each of the Academy annuals; 7,000 of each volume of the Academy-supervised history.

Two of the most useful works, the Mosfilm collection and Nizhni's edition of Eisenstein lectures, each have a *tirage* of 10,000. And the only one of the books under review that can, in every way, be called 'popular' is *Art for the Millions*—which had a first edition of 20,000, though it is not inexpensive: 58 rubles, 80 kopeks. It is primarily a picture-book, of well-chosen photographs (with English as well as Russian captions) from all the memorable films produced in Soviet studios between 1917 and 1957.

This is topped by the circulation of the magazine *Iskusstvo Kino*, which is now 21,300. Even this has been exceeded by the careful and luxuriously produced book *Charles Spencer Chaplin*, by the late Georgi Avenarius—30,000! JAY LEYDA.

## RADIO FOR EVERYMAN

**Radio Today.** I. Radunskeya and M. Zhabotinsky. (FLPH. 1959. 8/-). Available from Collet's.)

**T**HIS is a book designed for the general reader wishing to acquaint himself in broad outline with the advances made in radio and electronics.

No technical knowledge is assumed, and the authors attempt in the first chapter to give explanations of electrical oscillations and valves. This will probably be a difficult part of an otherwise straightforward book. The reader is recommended to go through this chapter, glean what he can and not being deterred if it is not much. Just in one other part is the book difficult—in the section on radar the authors have forgotten for whom they are writing and made an attempt to explain the klystron valve.

On finishing the book the reader will have a good picture of the whole field of radio and electronics. Next time he switches on the television he will have an appreciation of the great ability of man as a technician and as a surmounter of difficulties. He will realise how important science was in the last war in fields other than those of atomic energy. He will be able to appreciate that in radio-astronomy we are now able to probe into the depths of space, and have taken a step forward almost comparable with that made by Galileo's telescope.

The chapter on electronic computing machines is excellent. The binary scale of counting is clearly explained and its use with flip-flop circuits shown. There is a short and fascinating section on the problems of electronic translation. In several chapters the book is valuable supplementary reading to Professor Bernal's *World Without War*.

Semi-conductor devices, transistors, are dealt with and will serve to put readers acquainted only with thermionic valves well in the picture of this most important development. The book ends, as one would expect, on radio in the conquest of space.

It is a fitting finish: one only regrets that the book was written before what must surely be regarded as the greatest triumph of electronics, the photographing of the other side of the moon.

J. C. SIDDONS.

## FROM KENSINGTON TO KRASNOYARSK

**Siberian Arctic.** Jonas Lied. (Methuen. 217 pp. 30/-.)

**T**HE British schoolboy learns of the early ventures that took the Vikings to the shores of Canada, the discoveries of Columbus and his successors, the pioneer work of the East India and Hudson's Bay Companies. Jonas Lied begins his new book, *Siberian Arctic*, by reminding us that there was a parallel

to each of these in an eastward direction, into the Arctic Ocean and Siberia.

Expanding this thesis, he provides a great deal of interesting information which has hitherto not been readily accessible to the general public; but *Siberian Arctic* is designed primarily to show the origins and development of the 'Siberian Steamship, Manufacturing and Trading Company Ltd.', of which the author, a Norwegian business man, was one of the founders. Another was Mr. Alfred Ernest Derry, a director of the Kensington High Street emporium of Derry and Toms, who in his search for stock for his shop used to visit the famous Nizhni Novgorod fair every summer.

Reflecting that the heavy expense of rail-roading goods of Siberian origin to Baltic ports could be considerably reduced by shipping them down the river Yenisei and through the Arctic Ocean (the Kara sea-route), Mr. Derry became obsessed with the idea. A chance encounter with Jonas Lied led to Messrs. Derry and Toms financing the two gentlemen in an exploratory visit to Russia.

A little later, Derry was trying to buy a Thames passenger steamer from the London County Council, for use on the Yenisei river, while another gentleman well known in the world of commerce, Sir Thomas Lipton, was making arrangements for the export of tea to Russia via the Arctic.

It was in this atmosphere of growing optimism for the future of Anglo-Siberian trade that the Siberian company was founded in January 1912, with its head office in the Siberian town of Krasnoyarsk. Mr. Lied even went so far as to acquire Russian nationality in order to overcome the inconvenience of a Russian law which prevented foreigners from owning steamships on Russian rivers. Ocean-going steamers were chartered. Trade expanded and plans were made for the construction of ship-building yards, pulp and paper factories and even new ports in northern Siberia.

However, the success of the Bolshevik revolution put an end to these schemes, and when foreign trade was resumed in 1920 it was under the direction of a new Soviet organisation.

The subsequent development of the Soviet Arctic, aided by all the scientific and technological advances made in the USSR, is outlined briefly in the concluding chapters of *Siberian Arctic*. 'The Siberian north has become a place of homes and families with schools and hospitals and domestic comforts, radios, shops, cinemas and even theatres', writes Mr. Lied.

Nevertheless, the directors and shareholders of the Siberian company did not give up hope, and even after World War II company meetings were still being held. 'As long as we existed and were registered and held our statutory meetings there was a chance that a new development of some kind might occur.'

Among these 'developments' the author mentions the possibility of a Soviet-American war, or a collapse of the Communist régime as a result of quarrels among the Soviet leaders after the death of Stalin. Even after the emergence of Khrushchov's leadership 'there were bound to be some remarkable changes, if not in our lifetime, at least soon after'.

In 1950, a small group of veteran shareholders, including some wealthy business men, formed a syndicate which bought all the shares of the Siberian company and appointed Mr. Lied as honorary consultant. In 1952 he was presented with more than half a ton of documents, the complete records of the company's business since its foundation. From these was gleaned the material for this readable and informative book, written by a man who must surely be the most optimistic of all the merchant adventurers.

He concludes his last chapter with these words: 'This is the story of the company. The story is not entirely ended. At least I hope not.'

J.S.G.

## MOISTENING THE LIPS

**Russia—the Land and the People.** Joan Charnock. (Bodley Head. 192 pp. 15/-.)

**A**LTHOUGH the publishers claim that this book has been written specially for older children and will do much to answer for young people the question 'What is it like in Russia?' the children would need to be knowledgeable indeed about old Russia to follow and understand Mrs. Charnock's trends of thought. Adults, too, would find it no easier, even those who know something of Russian history.

Apparently Joan Charnock first went to Russia in 1936. She met and married her husband, Harry Charnock, whose family had been 'domiciled in Russia for many years and Russian was his first language'. After his father's death he managed a huge cotton mill near Moscow employing 17,000 people. It had its own schools and hospitals, and one is given the impression that a happy, contented relationship existed between the English industrialist and his Russian workers.

Mrs. Charnock's book throughout is coloured against a background of pre-1917 Russian society. She finds it desirable in many respects. 'Laws were made to regulate conditions of employment', she says, 'and those decreed at the end of the 19th century by the Tsar were actually in advance of conditions in England at that time.' Three paragraphs later, however, she tells us that 'English business men were acutely conscious of the state of tension in Russia'.

Her book is sprinkled liberally with names of people whom she either knew very well or met in her social circles. Her familiarity

with such names, however, means absolutely nothing to the reader, who is as much in the dark after reading about them as before.

At odd moments Mrs. Charnock seems to recall that she is supposed to be writing about the USSR for children who know little or nothing about the largest country in the world. At such times she scatters a few sentences here and there about things that are happening and gives some slight idea of the life and work of the people.

The trouble is that she cannot tear herself away from the past. Obviously it held delights for her and the circles in which she moved when she became interested in Russia. That the majority of the population did not share these delights is a historical fact. It took a revolution to get them.

The flyleaf rightly says that 'in spite of her importance in the modern world, little is generally known about the USSR and the Russian people'. Mrs. Charnock's endeavour to satisfy the growing thirst for knowledge barely moistens the reader's lips.

Even the title is a misnomer. Russia, the largest and best known, is one of 15 Soviet Republics. Together they form the USSR. Like so many people, Mrs. Charnock perpetuates the error of talking about Russia when in reality she means the USSR.

KATHLEEN TAYLOR.

## RUSSIAN NAMES

**Personal Names in Medieval Velikij Novgorod.** Astrid Baecklund. (Almqvist & Wiksells, Uppsala, 195 pp., price 27 Swedish Kr.)

**T**HIS is the ninth issue of a series subtitled 'Etudes de Philologie Slave', published by the University of Stockholm and devoted mainly though not exclusively to philological studies.

The present volume falls roughly into two parts: a 50-page historical introduction and a statistical study of the recurrence and forms of 21 Christian names of Greek (or Septuagint) origin appearing in medieval Novgorod texts.

The sources used were the collection of documents published by the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1949 under the title *Gramoty Velikogo Novgoroda i Pskova* (Documents of Novgorod the Great and of Pskov) and the Novgorod Chronicles published by the same Institute in 1950 under the title *Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis starshego i mladshego izvodov*. In an addendum the author has listed the name forms occurring in inscriptions on bark discovered during post-war excavations, described by A. V. Artsikhovski and V. I. Borovski in *Novgorodskie gramoty na bereste*, M. 1958.

Although the type and spelling of the Soviet editions of both the collections of documents and the chronicles have been modernised, this has been done with such

consistency and competence that the names studied still reflect the particularities of the Novgorod dialects. Moreover, the editors of both volumes have appended an index of personal names which facilitates onomastic studies.

The principal interest of such studies is philological and, in the particular case of changes affecting common names like John, Basil, Gregory, etc., largely phonological. However, it also throws considerable light on the formation of patronymics originally used mainly in the upper classes but which have become a characteristic feature of modern Russian. In their turn they contributed to the emergence of surnames, although the latter were still rare in medieval Novgorod and, generally speaking, were more often derived from nicknames, occupations or places of origin.

Furthermore, the form of names and their derivations can provide indications on the social structure of the Republic of Novgorod, the persistence of heathen survivals, the Russification of migrants, and even the position of women in society. Thus in previous studies based on the same material Astrid Baecklund attempted to pursue some such sociological sidelines. In one ('Les prénoms scandinaves dans la tradition médiévale de Velikij Novgorod', *Revue des études slaves*, 1956) the author showed that of the 2,000 persons named in the *Gramoty* and the 400 in the Chronicle only 23 had names which could be identified as being of Scandinavian origin; 19 of these occur in the Chronicles and four in the *Gramoty*. Naturally the Chronicles tend to record the activities of more prominent persons like church and state dignitaries, while the *Gramoty*, along with official documents, include deeds and contracts drawn up and witnessed by private individuals.

The social status of some of them can be ascertained. Despite the smallness of the sample and the uncertainty of the social positions of some of the persons named, one gains the impression that Scandinavian names survived in the upper rather than in the lower classes. However, it should be borne in mind that the frequently recurring name of Gleb may have been given to children at baptism by parents with no Scandinavian associations whatever because (with his brother Boris) Gleb was the first canonised Russian saint.

Similarly, another study by the same author ('The Names of Women in Medieval Novgorod', *For Roman Jacobson: Essays on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, The Hague, 1956) shows that only 17 women are mentioned in the Chronicles and 76 in the *Gramoty*. Since several were called by the same name of Maria, Sophia, etc., the total number of names is only 32, and all of them are those of the Orthodox calendar, while pre-Christian names still occurred sometimes among males. Again, it would be rather bold to assume on the slender evidence of the texts examined that Christianisation was

more complete among women than among men. On this score it is rather interesting to note that pre-Christian names appear usually as patronymics.

As to Christian names, they are found in their Greek or Church Slavonic forms in the earlier texts, but then give way to more Russianised forms. Incidentally, despite the many contacts between Novgorod and the Hanseatic League, Christian names of the Latin rite such as Charles, Henry or William do not occur.

The 21 Greek Orthodox names studied occur in all classes of society, whereas pre-Christian dithematic names of the Tverdislav type used to denote members of ruling families only; yet the more 'literary' Greek or Church Slavonic forms persist longer among the clergy and the upper classes and reappear again at the turn of the 14th-15th century, when many Bulgarian monks, fleeing before the Turkish invasion, sought refuge in Russian monasteries. The actual evolution of forms was partly through scholarly assimilation, e.g. the Greek ending *as* being rendered by *a*, and *ios* by *ii* (Kosmas—Kosma, Ignatios—Ignatii), etc., and partly by addition of the colloquial Slavonic suffixes such as *ko*, *ka*, *sha*, etc. (Ivanko, Grisha), or vowel changes reflecting the Novgorodian (and Dvina) dialects (Oleksandr).

In listing the bearers of the 21 names studied the author has indicated whenever possible the dates and the social position of the person named. This has often proved difficult for lack of evidence or the disputed meaning of words such as 'smerd'.

Although the study is intended for readers primarily interested in philology, many others will enjoy the introductory pages giving a good glimpse of the history of the 'Venice of the North'.

E.K.

## SLAVONIC PAPERS

**Canadian Slavonic Papers III (1958).** Published for the Canadian Association of Slavists. 121 pp. (University of Toronto Press, 1959, unpriced.)

**Oxford Slavonic Papers. Vol. IX, 1960.** Edited by S. Kononov. 164 pp. (Clarendon Press, OUP, 21/-.)

THE Canadian publication has not previously come the way of this reviewer. It has a strong literary and philological bent, by no means confined to Russian subjects. An unpublished article by Peter Kropotkin on the ideas of Leo Tolstoy and papers on Merezhkovsky's retrograde mysticism (particularly in relation to 1905 and the intelligentsia's part in that period of vast upheaval), on the early verse of the Ukrainian poet Sosyura and on modern Russian phonetics do not set the Thames on fire, but they will be of interest to the specialist.

Mrs. Maya Jenkins's moving article on a play of Pisemsky—*Gorkaya Sudbina* ('Bitter Fate')—goes much deeper, and will be



valuable to the general English reader in Russian history and literature at least as much as to the 'expert'.

It is a pity that a promising volume (which seems to be part of an annual series) should be marred by two somewhat childish excursions into the anti-Sovietism still to all appearances obligatory in collections on Russia published on the American continent.

The Oxford publication continues to throw valuable documentary light on important aspects of Russian history, with a refreshingly wide scope.

Prof. Dewey, of the University of Michigan, writes on trial by combat in Muscovite Russia; Prof. Konovalov contributes a new and final batch of letters from the first Romanov Tsars to British monarchs, edited, as all its predecessors, with judicious scholarship that commendably takes into account the interest of the non-academic reader as well. Mr. J. S. G. Simmons gives two literary letters from Dostoyevsky and A. K. Tolstoy; and the lecturer in Russian at Leiden University a number written by Turgenev between 1877 and 1882.

Other features are two letters from the *narodnik* Lavrov (1878 and 1882) and—a find—32 letters of A. P. Chekhov.

In view of the interest in Britain in nearly all these writers, one shares with the editor his regret at not being able to print English translations. Some letters of Rilke, with an extensive commentary, are of greater interest to students of the German writer than of Russia.

In general, the editor once again deserves the compliments of all genuinely interested in Anglo-Soviet cultural relations for his almost unique care to keep irrelevant anti-Soviet sallies out of this welcome publication. *O si sic omnes.*

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN.

## CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

**Soviet State Law.** A. Denisov and M. Kirichenko. (FLPH. 1960. 459 pp. 15/-.  
Available from Central Books.)

THIS is an English translation of one of the standard works of Soviet constitutional law used in higher education institutes of the Soviet Union. It has been brought up to date from time to time, but has responded little to some criticisms made of it in the law journals. It would appear to contain all the changes of substance in the constitutional law up to about mid-1959.

There are 370 pages of text and nearly 100 pages of appendices setting out the text of the constitution of the USSR and the supporting legislation.

The opening chapters discuss the Soviet attitude to constitutional law as a discipline, the history of the Union constitution and the interrelation of the social and political structures. This is followed by a description

of the central and local political institutions, including the courts and the electoral system.

It is probably the best available source of information about Soviet constitutional law although it does present difficulties for the average reader. It lacks an index (always a bad deficiency in a text-book), and the English translation tends to add to the difficulty of understanding what is in itself a difficult subject.

It would considerably help the English reader if the translator would add footnotes explaining what is meant by Soviet lawyers when, for example, they use expressions like 'norms determining and legally embodying the social structure'. The terms used presumably have an exact scientific meaning, which is not always evident in the text.

Recent articles in the law journals have suggested that there is considerable dissatisfaction with the uncritical acceptance of the 1936 constitution still substantially unchanged and show the need for a book which will discuss these criticisms based on comparisons with constitutions of other socialist countries and with the changing political practices in the Soviet Union. The English reader, both specialist and non-specialist, would be happier to read such a book which would discuss conventional practice as well as the law.

M. HOOKHAM.

## RUSSIAN SAINTS

**Saints of Russia.** Constantin de Grunwald. (Hutchinson, 180 pp. 25/-.)

THIS book is a contribution to a general knowledge of Russia's past and of some of her great saints, and should be especially welcomed by the many who cannot read Russian. While it does not represent any original research, it nevertheless touches on a number of very important points, such as the Christian attitude to property, to the State, war, struggle with evil, as raised by these saints, often in opposition to the official line of the Church at that time—in fact the sort of problems which Christian churches the world over usually refuse to face and avoid putting before the Christian conscience.

Space prevents me from making more than two references.

1. For St. Nil Sorski (end of 15th and beginning of 16th centuries) 'attachment to wealth... appeared incompatible with the quest for spiritual perfection', says the author, and quotes St. Nil as saying: 'We have been taught by the holy fathers to earn our daily bread and other necessities, like our Lord and His most pure Mother: if a man will not work neither shall he eat, says the Apostle.'
2. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk (18th century), who partly served as a prototype for Dostoevsky's Fr. Zosima in *The*



*Brothers Karamazov*, had the daring to challenge Catherine the Great's foreign policy and spoke against her wars of aggression, saying : 'Do not lay hands on what belongs to another, do not shed the blood of your subjects in vain : sovereigns will answer before God for every man who is slain in an unjust war.'

He stood for the abolition of serfdom and wanted to prevent the empress from spreading it to her conquered territories. He lashed out against abuses and against the nobility for their maltreatment of the peasants. He attacked the root of evil—the system of serfdom—and suffered for all this.

I suspect that the author is a Roman Catholic, as some of the historical interpretations (or lack of them !) seem to suggest leanings in that direction as opposed to the Russian Orthodox. The book, however, is well worth reading, especially for the better understanding of the Russian Church in the USSR at the present time and the high ideals of true Orthodoxy.

XENIA FIELDING CLARKE.

## POPULAR GEOLOGY

**Fundamentals of Geology.** V. Obrucher. (FLPH, 1959. 370 pp. 12/6. Available from Central Books.)

THIS is a popular introduction to physical or dynamic geology, little being said of historic geology or petrology. There are no fewer than 285 figures, many of them splendid photographs, which greatly help in understanding the text. The author, Academician Obrucher, spent a long life in the active study of geology—he mentions work he did on the Altai Mountains back in 1911, and a volcano on the Vitim Plateau is named after him—and in this book he handled a great wealth of material with much skill.

*Fundamentals of Geology* begins with the erosion caused by water, 'What the Brook Murmurs'. At the sea-shore, in the next chapter, we find out more about erosion, but also about its opposite, deposition. Water does not only work on the surface, it has a great effect underground too. The agents which weather rocks—sun and frost, atmosphere and moisture, plants and animals—are described. Wind action has a chapter to itself, which ends with an account of deserts—as 'dust' factories these play an important part in nature beneficial to man.

The chapter entitled 'Travelling Stones' starts with the large stones seen on the fields in the USSR and then explains what glaciers are and how glaciers got the stones there. After this follows an exciting chapter on volcanoes—splendidly illustrated. One might almost say that the author writes lovingly of volcanoes ; he even points out

that loss of human life caused by them is small in comparison with earthquakes, floods or typhoons. After an explanation of the building and destruction of mountains we return to earthquakes. No hope is held out that man will ever control them.

A brief history of our earth is given, followed by an account of catastrophes which have assailed it. The riches of the earth, in particular Soviet earth, are given a brief section ; and the last chapter in this veteran geologist's book, headed 'The Young Pathfinder', consists of advice to novices.

The introduction says that the book is 'designed for young readers who are acquainted with the rudiments of physics and chemistry'. Perhaps in Britain it could have a different kind of reader. In *The Two Cultures* C. P. Snow has shown how illiterate English men of letters are in science. Perhaps as a result of this and similar statements some people who have never read a book on science before are now beginning to do so, in a spirit of penitence. They could do worse than start with *Fundamentals of Geology*.

They will find that no knowledge of physics or chemistry is needed to appreciate the book. They will find, too, that books on science can be well written.

J. C. SIDDONS.

## TEACHING AID FOR ADULTS

**Graded Reading in Russian History.** Leon Stilman. (Columbia, 1960. 24/-. Available from Collet's.)

LEON STILMAN is already known in this country for his *Russian Verbs of Motion*. The present volume differs from other readers at the intermediate level in that it has a specific theme, the formation of the Russian state from the beginnings to the reign of Ivan III, where it stops rather abruptly.

There are 18 passages, each some one-and-a-half to two pages, followed by exercises (quotations for oral practice and sentences for translation into Russian) based on the passage. There are also a general vocabulary and four maps. The texts are stressed. It is intended as an introduction to Russian sources of 'average difficulty' (?).

Due to the graded treatment, much of the material is naïve and oversimplified. History is presented in terms of personalities, anecdotes—the calling of the Varangians, Oleg's horse, Cyril and Methodius, Vladimir's envoys searching for the best faith (this one curiously truncated), Alexander Nevsky, etc.—and broad generalisations. This naïveté is particularly noticeable in the handling of the spread of Christianity and Batu's campaigns, which are accounted for by his having an *ulus* extending to the 'ultimate' sea, as a result of which he was moving around trying to get to know the extent of his domain. Naturally one cannot expect a convincing

picture of historical processes, and there is little continuity.

On the whole, the range is too wide for a book of this nature. Too much space is devoted to the movements of the Tartars and their internal organisation, to Poland and Lithuania, and too little to the beginning of Moscow. Doubtful statements concern the *udjel* system and there is a slip about the date of Ivan III's accession to the grand ducal title (pp. 68, 37).

But then the author does not claim this to be a history book. It is a textbook for language students. A reasonably scholarly idiom appropriate to the subject matter is maintained, though clearly one cannot expect the Russian of Klyuchevsky. However, the diffuseness of the material is reflected in the vocabulary, where there is a pronounced unbalance in the direction of un-Russian terms. An excessive use is made of detailed, and often non-Slavonic, geography. Many of the Tartar and other non-Russian leaders are mentioned by name (Chengis Khan appears in two versions), while Yuri Dolgoruky is not. We have the word *ulus* but not *krepost*, and *kremľ* occurs only on the very last page of the book.

Doubtful linguistic points include the frequent use of *na jug*, *na vostok*, etc., where *k jugu*, *k vostoku* would be more correct. From certain inaccuracies it would appear that the proofs were read rather hurriedly. Misprints include: *zavisilo* (pp. 8, 39); *bjelorussov* (pp. 8, 42); *vyrostat* (pp. 56, 75) (correct *vyrastat* in the vocabulary); *unuyu* (pp. 53, 68); *politicheskyyu* (pp. 30, 91).

There is no great consistency in the stress pattern. Sometimes monosyllabics (e.g. *do* and *no*) are stressed, and there are quite a few wrongly stressed words (*nó v starýje vremjéna*, etc.) Punctuation is erratic. The treatment of words in the vocabulary is also inconsistent. Some words are treated fully, others are merely given as they occur in the text (*naseljon*, *ispol'zuja*, etc.) Gerunds are called participles and there are several wrong aspectual pairs: *nekotoryje* seems to be *plurale tantum*, *razvalina* is misleadingly given in the singular, *khozjain* is given without the plural, etc.

The title itself, *Chrenija po russkoj istorii*, is not very happy. Nevertheless, in spite of these flaws, this is a welcome addition to the teaching aids suitable for adult classes.

P. HENRY.

## INDUSTRIALISING KAZAKHSTAN

Where Economic Inequality is No More. P. Alampiev. (FLPH. 8/-. Available from Central Books.)

KAZAKHSTAN is offered as an example of the way in which economic development in the Soviet Union overcomes the inequality between colonial and metropolitan peoples. Apart from the somewhat florid

title and a phrase here and there, Mr. Alampiev does not beat the propaganda drum, but sets out a sober account, in terms of facts and figures, of the backward, stagnant state of the region before the revolution and its growth since. With the tale he has to tell, a sober style is certainly the most effective.

As a contribution to the general development of the Soviet economy, it was obviously necessary to exploit to the full the natural resources of the region, in particular oil, copper and lead; but the Soviet planners made it a matter of policy to break the old colonial pattern of trade in primary products against manufactures, and the old colonial hierarchy of native labour and metropolitan technicians.

Though not yet fully up to the level reached in Russia, output *per capita* of the main industrial products is well on the way, and the process of evening up development will continue rapidly over the near future now that the foundations have been laid.

Even more remarkable than the physical investment achieved in the period is the training of a skilled labour force (with a high proportion of women workers) and the opening up of all professions and branches of learning to once illiterate peoples.

The book concentrates mainly on industry. It does not seek to disguise the 'errors' of the collectivisation of agriculture. We would like to know more of how they have been overcome and how the present position and future prospects are developing.

The war period also is rather slightly treated. Presumably the strategic movement of industry eastward was an influence in forcing the pace.

The translation, by Leo Lempert, is clear and readable.

JOAN ROBINSON.

## WALL CHARTS

Wall Charts of the Soviet Union. A series of five, each chart 36in. x 24in., published by Educational Productions Ltd. (C 728/1-5). 30/- the set.

THE paucity of visual aid material illustrating the Soviet Union makes this series of wall charts especially welcome.

Each chart deals with one aspect of Soviet geography. In each case a central map is the main feature, which are useful teaching aids, but marred in some cases by the absence of scales. The maps are framed by drawings illustrating the data mapped, but unfortunately they are often badly chosen and poorly sketched.

Here are some of the individual charts.

(1) *Government*. The map simply illustrates the various republics of the Soviet Union, but the drawings fail to demonstrate adequately the racial variety.

(2) *Physical features*. Here there are two maps. One shows the main rivers and relief (three layers of colour shading); the other

is a clear map of the main vegetation belts. The border illustrations are poor both for context and style. No data, either in map or graph form, are concerned with climate, yet this is a key factor in Soviet geography.

(3) *Agriculture.* The map is inadequate since it serves simply to locate the areas represented by the marginal illustrations. The latter do demonstrate the variety of crops within the Soviet Union, but their location is not always accurate.

(4) *Industry and communications.* Of the two maps included, the one concerned with the main industrial regions is very clear, showing also the sources of coal, oil and iron. The importance of hydro-electric power should have been stressed. No indication is given of the scale of industry. The map of communications has had to be selective, and only the main railway lines are shown. And surely it would have been better to insert the more important canals rather than air routes.

(5) An excellent map demonstrates clearly the world position of the Soviet Union. The projection has been well chosen; not only does it show all the bordering countries, but it brings out the importance of the trans-Arctic routes.

As a whole the charts give no true indication of the racial composition, climatic variety and wealth of national resources of the Soviet Union. However, the maps are clear enough to serve as illustrative material for lessons, provided the teacher supplies the omissions mentioned above.

R. ALLISON.

## RUSSIAN GRAMMAR ON A CHART

*Elementary Russian Grammar in One Sheet.*  
Dr. I. Frieman. (Collet's 3/6.)

**I**S it possible to realise the dream of every student of Russian and provide him with a handy little compendium containing all that matters in Russian grammar, a kind of log table that never lets you down?

Attempts have been made, like Segal's movable dial providing the right ending at the touch of a finger. Dr. Frieman's effort is in the shape of a wall chart containing a great deal of information. There are sections on declensions and conjugations, lists of idioms, verbs, adjectives, etc., rules on aspect and verbal forms—and exceptions, with endings, etc., set out in red type.

Such a guide, to be useful, must be clear, correct and confined to essentials. This chart abounds in obscurities, irrelevancies,

inaccuracies and downright mistakes. In seeking to use every square inch, things have been squeezed into odd little corners, hence the bewildering impression it makes. Sections on nouns are interspersed with rubrics on vowels, 'permutation' (far removed from verbs and adjectives) and a poor section on 'participles and conjunctions'. Sections on pronouns face each other diagonally across the sheet.

Obscurities include: 'Some verbs ending in *jet*' belong not to the 2nd conjugation. They take the *je* ending added to *je*. The 'usages' of the genitive are introduced by: '1. Masculine animate objects in singular and for all animate objects in plural. 2. For objects in a negative sentence' (both points being confusing and anyway incomplete). 'The SHORT form (predicate) coming after a noun or pronoun is joined with these by the verb TO BE.' (Only the 'hard' endings are referred to.)

It is virtually impossible to follow through the columns on the declension of pronouns. One heading is 'Masc. Neut. Fem.', under which we find *ja*, *ty*, *sebjja* respectively. Palatalisation apparently applies only to the present tense of verbs. There is nothing on participles and gerunds at all.

Elaborate (and inaccurate) rules are given for the sake of isolated words: 'Neut. nouns ending in *ko*, *po*, *kho*, *cho* form the nom. pl. in "i" instead of "a".' It is too laborious to say that 'some masc. nouns end in prepositional case in *u* instead of *je* idiomatically'. What is meant by idiomatically? Why is no use made of standard abbreviations? According to this chart ordinals from 11th to 19th 'take adjectival endings', which is the case with all ordinals.

Further, we find that the plural of *god* is *leta*; that '*s* or *so* means "of"': that 'to express "during the" the instrumental is used'. It is insufficient to say that 'neuter nouns ending in *-mja* insert "en" before the termination when declined'. Present tense endings are incomplete, the 3rd pers. pl. in *-ut* and *-at* being omitted. Much space is wasted on variants of the 1st pers. pl. imper., while the 2nd pers. imperf. imper. is only given with the negative. *Chitajte*, *guljajte*, *govorite* and *smotrite* are all misspelt. *Kto-to*, etc., and *po-russki* are not hyphenated. *Tak sebjje* is translated as 'so . . . so'. There is no alphabetical or indeed any other discernible order in the list of words. There are no stresses, and the typography is poor. And there are two versions of the author's name.

Should there be another edition of this chart, one hopes that these mistakes will be rectified.

P. HENRY.

# **SCR**

## ***Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR***

**14 KENSINGTON SQUARE, LONDON, W.8.**

**WESTern 1571-4**

FOUNDED 1924



### **OFFICERS 1959-60**

#### **President**

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

#### **Vice-Presidents**

LORD CHORLEY OF KENDAL, MILES MALLESon, MISS MARY MERRALL,  
LADY SIMON OF WYTHENSHAW.

#### **Chairman**

LIPMANN KESSEL, M.C., M.B.E., F.R.C.S.

#### **Vice-Chairmen**

D. T. RICHNELL, B.A., F.L.A., PROF. J. S. SPINK, M.A., D. de l'UNIV.

#### **Secretary**

H. C. CREIGHTON, M.A.

#### **Executive Committee**

JOHN BERGER, LEONARD CASSINI, DR. L. CROME, M.C., M.R.C.P., MARTIN  
LAWRENCE, MISS D. LEVIN, JACK LINDSAY, THE HON. IVOR MONTAGU,  
A. G. MORTON, Ph.D., MRS. JOAN ROBINSON, M.A., F.B.A., ANDREW ROTHSTEIN, M.A.,  
JULIUS SILVERMAN, M.P., MISS JUDITH TODD, MISS MONICA WHATELY.

#### **Sections**

**Chess.** *President* : Prof. L. S. Penrose, F.R.S.

**Education.** *President* : Lady Simon of Wythenshawe. *Vice-Presidents* : G. D. B. Gray, Prof.  
J. A. Lauwerys, Dame Olive Wheeler. *Chairman* : Miss D. Levin.

**History & Archaeology.** *Chairman* : Robert Browning, M.A.

**Medical.** *Chairman* : Dr. Brian Kirman. *Secretary* : Dr. L. Crome.

**Science.** *Chairman* : Dr. J. P. Harding.

**Theatre.** *President* : Miles Malleson. *Vice-Presidents* : John Burrell, Joseph McLeod, Dame  
Sybil Thorndike.

# ***Russian handpainted works of art***



FIREBIRD

13x11 108/198 87/-;

13x9 108/187 85/-;

6x6 108/467 29/-

**PALEKH**

**FEDOSKINO**

**MSTERA**

**Obtainable from Finnegans of Bond Street**

For full information on all Russian Handicrafts  
write or phone the sole agents:

**SENIOR EXPORT & IMPORT CO. LTD**

6-20 John's Mews, John Street, London, W.C.1 Tel. Holborn 6742/5

Printed in Great Britain by Letchworth Printers Ltd. (T.U.), Letchworth, Herts—F9130

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG  
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED